

A M E L I A.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

CONTAINING VERY MYSTERIOUS
MATTER.

MISS Matthews did not in the least fall short of Mr. Booth in expressions of tenderness. Her eyes, the most eloquent orators on such occasions, exerted their utmost force; and, at the conclusion of his speech, she cast a look as languishingly sweet, as ever Cleopatra gave to Anthony. In real fact, this Mr. Booth had been her first love, and had made those impressions on her young heart, which the learned in this branch of philosophy affirm, and perhaps truly, are never to be eradicated.

When Booth had finished his story, a silence ensued of some minutes; an interval which the painter would describe much better than the writer. Some readers may, however, be able to make pretty pertinent conjectures, by what I have said above, especially when they are told that Miss Matthews broke the silence by a sigh, and tried, 'Why is Mr. Booth unwilling to allow me the happiness of thinking my misfortunes have been of some little advantage to him? Sure the happy Amelia would not be so selfish to envy me that pleasure. No; not if she was as much the fondest as she is the happiest of women.' 'Good Heaven! Madam,' said he, 'do you call my

'poor Amelia the happiest of women!'
—'Indeed I do,' answered she briskly;
'O, Mr. Booth! there is a speck of white in her fortune, which, when it falls to the lot of a sensible woman, makes her full amends for all the crosses which can attend her. Perhaps she may not be sensible of it; but if it had been my blessed fate—O Mr. Booth! could I have thought when we were first acquainted, that the most agreeable man in the world had been capable of making the kind, the tender, the affectionate husband—the happy Amelia in those days was unknown; Heaven had not then given her a prospect of the happiness it intended her—but yet it did intend it her: for sure there is a fatality in the affairs of love; and the more I reflect on my own life, the more I am convinced of it. O Heavens! how a thousand little circumstances crowd into my mind. When you first marched into our town, you had then the colours in your hand; as you passed under the window where I stood, my glove by accident dropt into the street; you stooped, took up my glove, and, putting it upon the spike belonging to your colours, lifted it up to the window. Upon this, a young lady, who stood by, said, "So, Miss; the young officer hath accepted your challenge." I blushed then, and I blush now, when I confess to you I thought you the prettiest young fellow I had ever seen; and, upon my

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'Soth, I believe you was then the prettiest fellow in the world.' Booth here made a low bow, and cried, 'O dear Madam, how ignorant was I of my own happiness!—' Would you really have thought so?' answered she: 'however, there is some politeness, if there be no sincerity in what you say.' Here the governor of the enchanted castle interrupted them, and entering the room without any ceremony, acquainted the lady and gentleman, that it was locking-up time; and addressing Booth, by the name of captain, asked him if he would not please to have a bed, adding, that he might have one in the next room to the lady, but that it would come dear; for that he never let a bed in that room under a guinea, nor could he afford it cheaper to his father.

No answer was made to this proposal; but Miss Matthews, who had already learnt some of the ways of the house, said, she believed Mr. Booth would like to drink a glass of something; upon which the governor immediately trumpeted forth the praises of his rack-punch, and without waiting for any farther commands, presently produced a large bowl of that liquor.

The governor having recommended the goodness of his punch by a hearty draught, began to revive the other matter, saying, that he was just going to bed, and must first lock up. 'But, suppose,' said Miss Matthews, with a smile, 'the captain and I should have a mind to sit up all night?'—'With all my heart,' said the governor; but I expect a consideration for those matters. For my part, I don't enquire into what doth not concern me; but single and double are two things. If I lock up double, I expect half a guinea; and I'm sure the captain cannot think that's out of the way: it is but the price of a bagnio.

Miss Matthews's face became of the colour of scarlet at those words. However, she mustered up her spirits, and turning to Booth, said, 'What say you, captain? for my own part, I had never less inclination to sleep: which hath the greater charms for you, the punch or the pillow?'—'I hope Madam,' answered Booth, 'you have a better opinion of me, than to doubt

my preferring Miss Matthews's conversation to either.'—'I assure you,' replied she, 'it is no compliment to you, to say, I prefer yours to sleep at this time.'

The governor then, having received his fee, departed; and turning the key, left the gentleman and lady to themselves.

In imitation of him, we will lock up likewise a scene which we do not think proper to expose to the eyes of the public. If any over-curious readers should be disappointed on this occasion, we will recommend such readers to the apologies with which certain gay ladies have lately been pleased to oblige the world, where they will possibly find every thing recorded that passed at this interval.

But though we decline painting the scene, it is not our intention to conceal from the world the frailty of Mr. Booth, or of his fair partner, who certainly passed that evening in a manner inconsistent with the strict rules of virtue and chastity.

To say the truth, we are much more concerned for the behaviour of the gentleman, than of the lady; not only for his sake, but for the sake of the best woman in the world, whom we should be sorry to consider as yoked to a man of no worth nor honour.

We desire, therefore, the good-natured and candid reader will be pleased to weigh attentively the several unlucky circumstances which occurred so critically, that Fortune seemed to have used her utmost endeavours to ensnare poor Booth's constancy. Let the reader set before his eyes a fine young woman, in a manner a first love, conferring obligations, and using every art to soften, to allure, to win, and to inflame; let him consider the time and place; let him remember that Mr. Booth was a young fellow in the highest vigour of life; and, lastly, let him add one single circumstance, that the parties were alone together; and then if he will not acquit the defendant, he must be convicted; for I have nothing more to say in his defence.

CHAP. II.

THE LATTER PART OF WHICH WE EXPECT WILL PLEASE OUR READER.

READER BETTER THAN THE
FORMER.

A Whole week did our lady and gentleman live in this criminal conversation, in which the happiness of the former was much more perfect than that of the latter; for though the charms of Miss Matthews, and her excessive endearments, sometimes lulled every thought in the sweet lethargy of pleasure; yet in the intervals of his fits, his virtue alarmed and roused him, and brought the image of poor injured Amelia to haunt and torment him. In fact, if we regard this world only, it is the interest of every man to be either perfectly good, or completely bad. He had better destroy his conscience, than gently wound it. The many bitter reflections which every bad action costs a mind in which there are any remains of goodness, are not to be compensated by the highest pleasure which such an action can produce.

So it happened to Mr. Booth. Repentance never failed to follow his transgressions; and yet so perverse is our judgment, and so slippery is the descent of vice, when once we are entered into it, the same crime which he now repented of, became a reason for doing that which was to cause his future repentance; and he continued to sin on, because he had begun. His repentance however returned still heavier and heavier, till at last it flung him into a melancholy, which Miss Matthews plainly perceived, and at which she could not avoid expressing some resentment in obscure hints, and ironical compliments on Amelia's superiority to her whole sex, who could not cloy a gay young fellow by many years possession. She would then repeat the compliments which others had made to her own beauty—and could not forbear once crying out, "Upon my soul, my dear Billy! I believe the chief disadvantage on my side, is in my superior fondness; for love, in the minds of men, hath one quality at least of a fever, which is to prefer coldness in the object. Confess, dear Will, is there not something vastly refreshing in the cool air of a prude?" Booth fetched a deep sigh, and begged her never more to mention Amelia's name. "O Will," cries she, "did that request proceed from the motive I

could wish, I should be the happiest of womankind!"—"You would not be sure, Madam," said Booth, "desire a sacrifice, which I must be a villain to make to any?"—"Desire!" answered she; "are there any bounds to the desires of love! have not I been sacrificed? hath not my first love been torn from my bleeding heart? I claim a prior right—As for sacrifices, I can make them too! and would sacrifice the whole world at the least call of my love."

Here she delivered a letter to Booth, which she had received within an hour, the contents of which were these:

"DEAREST MADAM,

"THOSE only who truly know what love is, can have any conception of the horrors I felt at hearing of your confinement at my arrival in town, which was this morning. I immediately sent my lawyer to enquire into the particulars, who brought me the agreeable news that the man whose heart's blood ought not to be valued at the rate of a single hair of yours, is entirely out of all danger, and that you might be admitted to bail. I presently ordered him to go with two of my tradesmen, who are to be bound in any sum for your appearance, if he should be mean enough to prosecute you. Though you may expect my attorney with you soon, I would not delay sending this, as I hope the news will be agreeable to you. My chariot will attend at the same time to carry you wherever you please. You may easily guess what a violence I have done to myself in not waiting on you in person; but I, who know your delicacy, feared it might offend, and that you might think me ungenerous enough to hope from your distresses an happiness, which I am resolved to owe to your free gift alone; when your good-nature shall induce you to bestow on me what no man living can merit. I beg you will pardon all the contents of this hasty letter, and do me the honour of believing me, dearest Madam, your most passionate admirer, and most obedient humble servant,

"DAMON."

Booth

Booth thought he had somewhere before seen the same hand; but in his present hurry of spirits could not recollect whose it was; nor did the lady give him any time for reflection: for he had scarce read the letter, when she produced a little bit of paper, and cried out, 'Here, Sir; here are the contents which he fears will offend me.' She then put a bank-bill of a hundred pounds into Mr. Booth's hands, and asked him with a smile, if he did not think she had reason to be offended with so much insolence.

Before Booth could return an answer, the governor arrived, and introduced Mr. Rogers the attorney, who acquainted the lady that he brought her discharge from her confinement, and that a chariot waited at the door to attend her wherever she pleased.

She received the discharge from Mr. Rogers, and said she was very much obliged to the gentleman who employed him, but that she would not make use of the chariot, as she had no notion of leaving that wretched place in a triumphant manner; in which resolution, when the attorney found her obstinate, he withdrew, as did the governor with many bows, and as many ladyships.

They were no sooner gone, than Booth asked the lady why she would refuse the chariot of a gentleman who had behaved with such excessive respect. She looked earnestly upon him, and cried, 'How unkind is that question! do you imagine I would go and leave you in such a situation? Thou knowest but little of Calista. Why, do you think I would accept this hundred pounds from a man I dislike, unless it was to be serviceable to the man I love? I insist on your taking it as your own, and using whatever you want of it.'

Booth protested in the solemnest manner, that he would not touch a shilling of it; saying, he had already received too many obligations at her hands, and more than ever he should be able, he feared, to repay. 'How unkind,' answered she, 'is every word you say! Why will you mention obligations? love never confers any. It doth every thing for it's own sake. I am not therefore obliged to the man whose passion makes him generous: for I feel how inconsiderable the whole

'world would appear to me, if I could throw it after my heart.'

Much more of this kind passed; she still pressing the bank-note upon him, and he as absolutely refusing, till Booth left the lady to dress herself, and went to walk in the area of the prison.

Miss Matthews now applied to the governor to know by what means she might procure the captain his liberty.

The governor answered, 'As he cannot get bail, it will be a difficult matter; and money to be sure there must be: for people, no doubt, expect to touch on these occasions. When prisoners have not wherewithal as the law requires to entitle themselves to justice, why they must be beholden to other people, to give them their liberty; and people will not, to be sure, suffer others to be beholden to them for nothing, whereof there is good reason; for how should we all live, if it was not for these things?'—'Well, well,' said she; 'and how much will it cost?'—'How much!' answered he; 'how much! why, let me see—' Here he hesitated some time, and then answered, that for five guineas he would undertake to procure the captain his discharge—that being the sum which he computed to remain in the lady's pocket; for as to the gentleman's, he had long been acquainted with the emptiness of it.

Miss Matthews, to whom money was as dirt, (indeed she may be thought not to have known the value of it) delivered him the bank-bill, and bid him get it changed: 'For if the whole,' says she, 'will procure him his liberty, he shall have it this evening.'

'The whole, Madam!' answered the governor, as soon as he had recovered his breath; for it almost forsook him at the sight of the black word *hundred*. 'No, no. There might be people indeed—but I am not one of those. A hundred! no, nor nothing like it. As for myself, as I said, I will be content with five guineas, and I am sure that's little enough. What other people will expect, I cannot exactly say. To be sure, his worship's clerk will expect to touch pretty handsomely; as for his worship himself, he never touches any thing, that is, not to speak of; but then the constable will expect something, and the watchmen must have something, and the lawyers

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lawyers on both sides, they must have their fees for finishing.—‘Well,’ said she; ‘I leave all to you. If it costs me twenty pounds, I will have him discharged this afternoon. But you must give his discharge into my hands, without letting the captain know any thing of the matter.’

The governor promised to obey her commands in every particular; nay, he was so very industrious, that though dinner was then just coming upon the table, at her earnest request he set out immediately on the purpose, and went, as he said, in pursuit of the lawyer.

All the other company assembled at table as usual, where poor Booth was the only person out of spirits. This was imputed by all present to a wrong cause; nay, Miss Matthews herself either could not, or would not, suspect that there was any thing deeper than the despair of being speedily discharged, that lay heavy on his mind.

However, the mirth of the rest, and a pretty liberal quantity of punch, which he swallowed after dinner, (for Miss Matthews had ordered a very large bowl at her own expence, to entertain the good company at her farewell) so far exhilarated his spirits, that when the young lady and he retired to their tea, he had all the marks of gaiety in his countenance, and his eyes sparkled with good-humour.

The gentleman and lady had spent about two hours in tea and conversation, when the governor returned, and privately delivered to the lady the discharge for her friend, and the sum of eighty-two pounds five shillings; the rest having been, he said, disbursed in the business, of which he was ready at any time to render an exact account.

Miss Matthews being again alone with Mr. Booth, she put the discharge into his hands, desiring him to ask her no questions; and adding, ‘I think, Sir, we have neither of us now any thing more to do at this place.’ She then summoned the governor, and ordered a bill of that day’s expence, for long scores were not usual there; and at the same time ordered a hackney-coach, without having yet determined whither she would go; but fully determined she was, wherever she went, to take Mr. Booth with her.

The governor was now approaching with a long roll of paper, when a faint

voice was heard to cry out hastily, ‘Where is he?’—and presently a female spectre, all pale and breathless, rushed into the room, and fell into Mr. Booth’s arms, where she immediately fainted away.

Booth made shift to support his lovely burden; though he was himself in a condition very little different from her’s. Miss Matthews, likewise, who presently recollected the face of Amelia, was struck motionless with the surprise; nay, the governor himself, though not easily moved at sights of horror, stood aghast, and neither offered to speak nor stir.

Happily for Amelia, the governess of the mansion had out of curiosity followed her into the room, and was the only useful person present on this occasion; she immediately called for water, and ran to the lady’s assistance, fell to loosening her stays, and performed all the offices proper at such a season; which had so good an effect, that Amelia soon recovered the disorder which the violent agitation of her spirits had caused, and found herself alive and awake in her husband’s arms.

Some tender caresses, and a soft whisper or two passed privately between Booth and his lady; nor was it without great difficulty that poor Amelia put some restraint on her fondness, in a place so improper for a tender interview. She now cast her eyes round the room, and fixing them on Miss Matthews, who stood like a statue, she soon recollected her; and addressing her by her name, said, ‘Sure, Madam, I cannot be mistaken in those features; though meeting you here might almost make me suspect my memory!’

Miss Matthews’s face was now all covered with scarlet. The reader may easily believe she was on no account pleased with Amelia’s presence; indeed she expected from her some of those insults of which virtuous women are generally so liberal to a frail sister: but she was mistaken; Amelia was not one

Who thought the nation ne’er could thrive,
Till all the whores were burnt alive.

Her virtue could support itself with it’s own intrinsic worth, without borrowing any assistance from the vices of other women; and she considered their natural infirmities as the objects of pity, not of contempt or abhorrence.

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When Amelia, therefore, perceived the visible confusion in Miss Matthews; the presently called to remembrance some stories which she had imperfectly heard; for, as she was not naturally attentive to scandal, and had kept very little company since her return to England, she was far from being a mistress of the lady's whole history. However, she had heard enough to impute her confusion to the right cause; she advanced to her, and told her she was extremely sorry to meet her in such a place, but hoped that no very great misfortune was the occasion of it.

Miss Matthews began, by degrees, to recover her spirits. She answered with a reserved air, 'I am much obliged to you, Madam, for your concern; we are all liable to misfortunes in this world. Indeed, I know not why I should be much ashamed of being in any place where I am in such good company.'

Here Booth interposed. He had before acquainted Amelia in a whisper, that his confinement was at an end. 'The unfortunate accident, my dear,' said he, 'which brought this young lady to this melancholy place, is entirely determined; and she is now as absolutely at her liberty as myself.'

Amelia imputing the extreme coldness and reserve of the lady to the cause already mentioned, advanced still more and more in proportion as she drew back; till the governor, who had withdrawn some time, returned, and acquainted Miss Matthews that her coach was at the door; upon which, the company soon separated. Amelia and Booth went together in Amelia's coach, and poor Miss Matthews was obliged to retire alone, after having satisfied the demands of the governor, which in one day only had amounted to a pretty considerable sum; for he with great dexterity proportioned his bills to the abilities of his guests.

It may seem, perhaps, wonderful to some readers, that Miss Matthews should have maintained that cold reserve towards Amelia, so as barely to keep within the rules of civility, instead of embracing an opportunity which seemed to offer, of gaining some degree of intimacy with a wife, whose husband she was so fond of; but besides that her spirits were entirely disconcerted by so sudden and unexpected

a disappointment; and besides the extreme horrors which she conceived at the presence of her rival, there is, I believe, something so outrageously suspicious in the nature of all vice, especially when joined with any great degree of pride, that the eyes of those whom we imagine privy to our failings, are intolerable to us, and we are apt to aggravate their opinions to our disadvantage far beyond the reality.

CHAP. III.

CONTAINING WISE OBSERVATIONS
OF THE AUTHOR, AND OTHER
MATTERS.

THERE is nothing more difficult, than to lay down any fixed and certain rules for happiness; or indeed to judge with any precision of the happiness of others, from the knowledge of external circumstances. There is sometimes a little speck of black in the brightest and gayest colours of Fortune, which contaminates and deadens the whole. On the contrary, when all without looks dark and dismal, there is often a secret ray of light within the mind, which turns every thing to real joy and gladness.

I have in the course of my life seen many occasions to make this observation; and Mr. Booth was at present a very pregnant instance of it's truth. He was just delivered from a prison, and in the possession of his beloved wife and children; and (which might be imagined greatly to augment his joy) Fortune had done all this for him within an hour without giving him the least warning or reasonable expectation of this strange reverse in his circumstances; and yet it is certain, that there were very few men in the world more seriously miserable than he was at this instant. A deep melancholy seized his mind, and cold damp sweats overspread his person, so that he was scarce animated; and poor Amelia, instead of a fond warm husband, bestowed her caresses on a dull lifeless lump of clay. He endeavoured however at first, as much as possible, to conceal what he felt, and attempted, what is the hardest of all tasks, to act the part of a happy man; but he found no supply of spirits to carry on this deceit, and would have probably

probably sunk under this attempt, had not poor Amelia's simplicity helped him to another fallacy, in which he had much better success.

This worthy woman very plainly perceived the disorder in her husband's mind; and having no doubt of the cause of it, especially when she saw the tears stand in his eyes at the sight of his children, threw her arms round his neck, and embracing him with rapturous fondness, cried out, 'My dear Billy, let nothing make you uneasy! Heaven will, I doubt not, provide for us and these poor babes. Great fortunes are not necessary to happiness. For my own part, I can level my mind with any state; and for those poor little things, whatever condition of life we breed them to, that will be sufficient to maintain them in. How many thousands abound in affluence, whose fortunes are much lower than ours! for it is not from nature, but from education and habit, that our wants are chiefly derived. Make yourself easy therefore, my dear love; for you have a wife who will think herself happy with you, and endeavour to make you so, in any situation. Fear nothing, Billy; industry will always provide us a wholesome meal, and I will take care that neatness and cheerfulness shall make it a pleasant one.'

Booth presently took the cue which she had given him. He fixed his eyes on her for a minute, with great earnestness and inexpressible tenderness; and then cried, 'O, my Amelia, how much are you my superior in every perfection! how wise, how great, how noble are your sentiments! why can I not imitate what I so much admire? why can I not look with your constancy on those dear little pledges of our loves? All my philosophy is baffled with the thought, that my Amelia's children are to struggle with a cruel, hard, unfeeling world, and to buffet those waves of fortune which have overwhelmed their father. Here, I own, I want your firmness, and am not without an excuse for wanting it; for am I not the cruel cause of all your wretchedness? have I not stepped between you and fortune, and been the cursed obstacle to all your greatness and happiness?'

'Say not so, my love,' answered she.

'Great I might have been, but never happy with any other man. Indeed, dear Billy, I laugh at the fears you formerly raised in me: what seemed so terrible at a distance, now it approaches nearer, appears to have been a mere bugbear; and let this comfort you, that I look on myself at this day as the happiest of women; nor have I done any thing which I do not rejoice in, and would, if I had the gift of prescience, do again.'

Booth was so overcome with this behaviour, that he had no words to answer. To say the truth, it was difficult to find any worthy of the occasion. He threw himself prostrate at her feet, whence poor Amelia was forced to use all her strength, as well as intreaties, to raise and replace him in his chair.

Such is ever the fortitude of perfect innocence, and such the depression of guilt in minds not utterly abandoned. Booth was naturally of a sanguine temper; nor would any such apprehensions as he mentioned have been sufficient to have restrained his joy at meeting with his Amelia. In fact, a reflection on the injury he had done her was the sole cause of his grief. This it was that enervated his heart, and threw him into agonies which all that profusion of heroic tenderness that the most excellent of women intended for his comfort served only to heighten and aggravate; as the more she rose in his admiration, the more she quickened his sense of his own unworthiness.

After a disagreeable evening, the first of that kind that he had ever passed with his Amelia, in which he had the utmost difficulty to force a little cheerfulness, and in which her spirits were at length overpowered by discerning the impression on his, they retired to rest, or rather to misery, which need not be described.

The next morning at breakfast, Booth began to recover a little from his melancholy, and to taste the company of his children. He now first thought of enquiring of Amelia, by what means she had discovered the place of his confinement. Amelia, after gently rebuking him for not having himself acquainted her with it; informed him, that it was known all over the country, and that she had traced the original of it to her sister, who had spread the news with a malicious joy, and added a circumstance

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which would have frightened her to death, had not her knowledge of him made her give little credit to it, which was, that he was committed for murder. But though she had discredited this part, she said, the not hearing from him, during several successive posts, made her too apprehensive of the rest. That she got a conveyance therefore for herself and children to Salisbury, from whence the stage-coach had brought them to town; and having deposited the children at his lodging, of which he had sent her an account on his first arrival in town, she took a hack, and came directly to the prison where she heard he was, and where she found him.

Booth excused himself, and with truth, as to his not having writ; for in fact he had writ twice from the prison, though he had mentioned nothing of his confinement; but as he sent away his letters after nine at night, the fellow to whom they were entrusted, had burnt them both for the sake of putting the two pence in his own pocket, or rather in the pocket of the keeper of the next gin-shop.

As to the account which Amelia gave him, it served rather to raise than to satisfy his curiosity. He began to suspect, that some person had seen both him and Miss Matthews together in the prison, and had confounded her case with his; and this the circumstance of murder made the more probable. But who this person should be, he could not guess. After giving himself therefore some pains in forming conjectures to no purpose, he was forced to rest contented with his ignorance of the real truth.

Two or three days now passed without producing any thing remarkable; unless it were, that Booth more and more recovered his spirits, and had now almost regained his former degree of cheerfulness, when the following letter arrived again to torment him;

DEAR BILLY,

TO convince you I am the most reasonable of women, I have given you up three whole days to the unmolested possession of my fortunate rival; I can refrain no longer from letting you know that I lodge in Dean Street, not far from the church, at the sign of the Pelican and Trumpet; where I expect this evening to see you. Believe me, I am with more affection

than any other woman in the world can be, my dear Billy, your affectionate, fond, doating,

F. MATTHEWS.

Booth tore the letter with rage, and threw it into the fire; resolving never to visit the lady more, unless it was to pay her the money she had lent him, which he was determined to do the very first opportunity: for it was not at present in his power.

This letter threw him back into his fit of dejection, in which he had not continued long, when a packet from the country brought him the following from his friend Dr. Harrison:

Lyons, Jan. 21. N. S.

SIR,

THOUGH I am now on my return home, I have taken up my pen to communicate to you some news I have heard from England, which gives me much uneasiness, and concerning which I can indeed deliver my sentiments with much more ease this way than any other. In my answer to your last, I very freely gave you my opinion, in which it was my misfortune to disapprove of every step you had taken; but those were all pardonable errors. Can you be so partial to yourself, upon cool and sober reflection, to think what I am going to mention is so? I promise you, it appears to me a folly of so monstrous a kind, that had I heard it from any but a person of the highest honour, I should have rejected it as utterly incredible. I hope you already guess what I am about to name; since Heaven forbid your conduct should afford you any choice of such gross instances of weakness! In a word, then, you have set up an equipage. What shall I invent in your excuse, either to others, or to myself? In truth, I can find no excuse for you; and what is more, I am certain you can find none for yourself. I must deal therefore very plainly and sincerely with you. Vanity is always contemptible; but when joined with dishonesty, it becomes odious and detestable. At whose expence are you to support this equipage? Is it not entirely at the expence of others; and will it not finally end

‘ in that of your poor wife and children? you know you are two years in arrears to me. If I could impute this to any extraordinary or common accident, I think I should never have mentioned it; but I will not suffer my money to support the ridiculous, and, I must say, criminal vanity of any one. I expect therefore to find at my return, that you have either discharged my whole debt, or your equipage. Let me beg you seriously to consider your circumstances and condition in life, and to remember that your situation will not justify any the least unnecessary expence. “Simply to be poor,” says my favourite Greek historian, “was not held scandalous by the wise Athenians; but highly so, to owe that poverty to our own indiscretion.” Present my affections to Mrs. Booth, and be assured, that I shall not, without great reason, and great pain too, ever cease to be,
 ‘ Your most faithful friend,

‘ R. HARRISON.’

Had this letter come at any other time, it would have given Booth the most sensible affliction; but so totally had the affair of Miss Matthews possessed his mind, that, like a man in a most raging fit of the gout, he was scarce capable of any additional torture; nay, he even made an use of this latter epistle, as it served to account to Amelia for that concern which he really felt on another account. The poor deceived lady therefore applied herself to give him comfort where he least wanted it. She said he might easily perceive that the matter had been misrepresented to the doctor, who would not, she was sure, retain the least anger against him, when he knew the real truth.

After a short conversation on this subject, in which Booth appeared to be greatly consoled by the arguments of his wife, they parted. He went to take a walk in the Park, and she remained at home to prepare him his dinner.

He was no sooner departed, than his little boy, not quite six years old, said to Amelia, ‘ La! mamma, what is the matter with my poor papa? what makes him look so as if he was go-

ing to cry? he is not half so merry as he used to be in the country.’ Amelia answered, ‘ Oh, my dear! your papa is only a little thoughtful; he will be merry again soon.’ Then looking fondly on her children, she burst into an agony of tears, and cried, ‘ Oh, heavens! what have these poor little infants done? why will the barbarous world endeavour to starve them, by depriving us of our only friend?—O, my dear, your father is ruined, and we are undone!’ The children presently accompanied their mother’s tears; and the daughter cried, ‘ Why, will any body hurt poor papa? hath he done any harm to any body?’—‘ No, my dear child,’ said the mother, ‘ he is the best man in the world, and therefore they hate him.’ Upon which the boy, who was extremely sensible at his years, answered, ‘ Nay, mamma, how can that be? have not you often told me, that if I was good every body would love me?’—‘ All good people will,’ answered she. ‘ Why don’t they love papa then?’ replied the child; ‘ for I am sure he is very good?’—‘ So they do, my dear,’ said the mother; ‘ but there are more bad people in the world, and they will hate you for your goodness.’—‘ Why then bad people,’ cries the child, ‘ are loved by more than the good.’—‘ No matter for that, my dear,’ said she; ‘ the love of one good person is more worth having, than that of a thousand wicked ones: nay, if there was no such person in the world, still you must be a good boy; for there is One in heaven who will love you, and his love is better for you than that of all mankind.’

This little dialogue, we are apprehensive, will be read with contempt by many; indeed we should not have thought it worth recording, was it not for the excellent example which Amelia here gives to all mothers. This admirable woman never let a day pass, without instructing her children in some lesson of religion and morality. By which means she had, in their tender minds, so strongly annexed the ideas of fear and shame to every idea of evil of which they were susceptible, that it must require great pains and length of habit to separate them.

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Though she was the tenderest of mothers, she never suffered any symptom of malevolence to shew itself in their most trifling actions without discouragement, without rebuke; and, if it broke forth with any rancour, without punishment. In which she had such success, that not the least marks of pride, envy, malice, or spite, discovered itself in any of their little words or deeds.

CHAP. IV.

IN WHICH AMELIA APPEARS IN NO UNAMIALE LIGHT.

AMELIA, with the assistance of a little girl, who was their only servant, had dressed her dinner; and she had likewise dressed herself as neat as any lady who had a regular set of servants could have done; when Booth returned, and brought with him his friend James, whom he had met with in the Park; and who, as Booth absolutely refused to dine away from his wife, to whom he had promised to return, had invited himself to dine with him. Amelia had none of that poultry pride, which possesses so many of her sex, and which disconcerts their tempers, and gives them the air and looks of furies, if their husbands bring in an unexpected guest, without giving them timely warning to provide a sacrifice to their own vanity. Amelia received her husband's friend with the utmost complaisance and good-humour: she made indeed some apology for the homeliness of her dinner; but it was politely turned as a compliment to Mr. James's friendship, which would carry him where he was sure of being so ill entertained; and gave not the least hint how magnificently she would have provided, *had she expected the favour of so much good company.* A phrase which is generally meant to contain not only an apology for the lady of the house, but a tacit satire on her guests for their intrusion, and is at least a strong insinuation that they are not welcome.

Amelia failed not to enquire very earnestly after her old friend Mrs. James, formerly Miss Bath, and was very sorry to find that she was not in town. The truth was, as James had

married out of a violent liking of, or appetite to, her person, possession had surfeited him, and he was now grown so heartily tired of his wife, that she had very little of his company; she was forced therefore to content herself with being the mistress of a large house and equipage in the country, ten months in the year by herself. The other two he indulged her with the diversions of the town; but then, though they lodged under the same roof, she had little more of her husband's society, than if they had been one hundred miles apart. With all this, as she was a woman of calm passions, she made herself contented; for she had never had any violent affection for James; the match was of the prudent kind, and to her advantage: for his fortune, by the death of an uncle, was become very considerable; and she had gained every thing by the bargain, but a husband, which her constitution suffered her to be very well satisfied without.

When Amelia, after dinner, retired to her children, James began to talk to his friend concerning his affairs. He advised Booth very earnestly to think of getting again into the army, in which he himself had met with such success, that he had obtained the command of a regiment, to which his brother-in-law was lieutenant-colonel. These preferments they both owed to the favour of fortune only: for though there was no objection to either of their military characters; yet neither of them had any extraordinary desert: and if merit in the service was a sufficient recommendation, Booth, who had been twice wounded in the siege, seemed to have the fairest pretensions; but he remained a poor half-pay lieutenant, and the others were, as we have said, one of them a lieutenant-colonel, and the other had a regiment. Such rises we often see in life, without being able to give any satisfactory account of the means, and therefore ascribe them to the good fortune of the person.

Both Colonel James and his brother-in-law were members of parliament: for as the uncle of the former had left him, together with his estate, an almost certain interest in a borough, so he chose to confer this favour on Colonel Bath; a circumstance which would have been highly immaterial to mention here, but as it serves to set forth the goodness

goodness of James, who endeavoured to make up in kindness to the family, what he wanted in fondness for his wife.

Colonel James then endeavoured all in his power to persuade Booth to think again of a military life, and very kindly offered him his interest towards obtaining him a company in the regiment under his command. Booth must have been a madman in his present circumstances to have hesitated one moment at accepting such an offer; and he well knew Amelia, notwithstanding her aversion to the army, was much too wise to make the least scruple of giving her consent. Nor was he, as it appeared afterwards, mistaken in his opinion of his wife's understanding: for she made not the least objection when it was communicated to her, but contented herself with an express stipulation, that wherever he was commanded to go (for the regiment was now abroad) she would accompany him.

Booth therefore accepted his friend's proposal with a profusion of acknowledgments; and it was agreed, that Booth should draw up a memorial of his pretensions, which Colonel James undertook to present to some man of power, and to back it with all the force he had.

Nor did the friendship of the colonel stop here. 'You will excuse me, dear Booth,' said he, 'if after what you have told me,' (for he had been very explicit in revealing his affairs to him) 'I suspect you must want money at this time. If that be the case, as I am certain it must be, I have fifty pieces at your service.' This generosity brought the tears into Booth's eyes; and he at length confessed, that he had not five guineas in the house; upon which James gave him a bank-bill for twenty pounds, and said he would give him thirty more the next time he saw him.

Thus did this generous colonel (for generous he really was to the highest degree) restore peace and comfort to this little family; and, by this act of beneficence, make two of the worthiest people two of the happiest that evening.

Here, reader, give me leave to stop a minute, to lament that so few are to be found of this benign disposition; that while wantonness, vanity, avarice and ambition, are every day rioting

and triumphing in the follies and weakness, the ruin and desolation of mankind, scarce one man in a thousand is capable of tasting the happiness of others. Nay, give me leave to wonder that pride, which is constantly struggling, and often imposing on itself to gain some little pre-eminence, should so seldom hint to us the only certain as well as laudable way of setting ourselves above another man; and that is, by becoming his benefactor.

C H A P. V.

CONTAINING AN EULOGIUM UPON INNOCENCE, AND OTHER GRAVE MATTERS.

BOOTH passed that evening, and all the succeeding day, with his Amelia, without the interruption of almost a single thought concerning Miss Matthews, after having determined to go on the Sunday, the only day he could venture without the verge in the present state of his affairs, and pay her what she had advanced for him in the prison. But she had not so long patience; for the third day, while he was sitting with Amelia, a letter was brought to him. As he knew the hand, he immediately put it in his pocket unopened, not without such an alteration in his countenance, that had Amelia, who was then playing with one of the children, cast her eyes towards him, she must have remarked it. This accident, however, luckily gave him time to recover himself: for Amelia was so deeply engaged with the little one, that she did not even remark the delivery of the letter. The maid soon after returned into the room, saying, the chairman desired to know if there was any answer to the letter. 'What letter?' cries Booth. 'The letter I gave you just now,' answered the girl. 'Sure,' cries Booth, 'the child is mad; you gave me no letter.'—'Yes, indeed I did, Sir,' said the poor girl. 'Why then, as sure as fate,' cries Booth, 'I threw it into the fire, in my reverie.' 'Why, child, why did you not tell me it was a letter? Bid the chairman come up—stay, I will go down myself; for he will otherwise dirt the stairs with his feet.'

Amelia was gently chiding the girl for

for her carelessness; when Booth returned, saying, it was very true that she had delivered him a letter from Colonel James, and that perhaps it might be of consequence. 'However,' says he, 'I will step to the coffee-house, and send him an account of this strange accident, which I know he will pardon in my present situation.'

Booth was overjoyed at this escape, which poor Amelia's total want of all jealousy and suspicion, made it very easy for him to accomplish: but his pleasure was considerably abated, when upon opening the letter, he found it to contain, mixed with several very strong expressions of love, some pretty warm ones of the upbraiding kind; but what most alarmed him was, a hint that it was in her power (Miss Matthews's) to make Amelia as miserable as herself. Besides, the general knowledge of

— *Furens quid femina possit,*

he had more particular reasons to apprehend the rage of a lady who had given so strong an instance how far she could carry her revenge. She had already sent a chairman to his lodgings, with a positive command not to return without an answer to her letter. This might of itself have possibly occasioned a discovery; and he thought he had great reason to fear, that if she did not carry matters so far as purposely and avowedly to reveal the secret to Amelia, her indiscretion would at least effect the discovery of that which he would at any price have concealed. Under these terrors, he might, I believe, be considered as the most wretched of human beings.

O innocence, how glorious and happy a portion art thou to the breast that possesses thee! thou fearest neither the eyes nor the tongues of men. Truth, the most powerful of all things, is thy strongest friend; and the brighter the light is in which thou art displayed, the more it discovers thy transcendent beauties! Guilt, on the contrary, like a base thief, suspects every eye that beholds him to be privy to his transgressions, and every tongue that mentions his name, to be proclaiming them. Fraud and Falshood are his weak and treacherous allies; and he lurks trembling in the dark, dreading every ray of light, lest it should disco-

ver him, and give him up to shame and punishment!

While Booth was walking in the Park with all these horrors in his mind, he again met his friend Colonel James, who soon took notice of that deep concern which the other was incapable of hiding. After some little conversation, Booth said, 'My dear colonel, I am sure I must be the most insensible of men, if I did not look on you as the best and the truest friend; I will, therefore, without scruple, repose a confidence in you of the highest kind. I have often made you privy to my necessities, I will now acquaint you with my shame, provided you have leisure enough to give me a hearing: for I must open to you a long history, since I will not reveal my fault, without informing you, at the same time, of those circumstances which, I hope, will in some measure excuse it.'

The colonel very readily agreed to give his friend a patient hearing. So they walked directly to a coffee-house at the corner of Spring Garden, where being in a room by themselves, Booth opened his whole heart, and acquainted the colonel with his amour with Miss Matthews from the very beginning, to his receiving that letter which had caused all his present uneasiness, and which he now delivered into his friend's hand.

The colonel read the letter very attentively twice over; (he was silent, indeed, long enough to have read it oftener:) and then turning to Booth, said, 'Well, Sir; and is it so grievous a calamity, to be the object of a young lady's affection; especially of one whom you allow to be so extremely handsome?'—'Nay, but my dear friend,' cries Booth, 'do not jest with me; you who know my Amelia.'—'Well, my dear friend,' answered James, 'and you know Amelia, and this lady too—but what would you have me do for you?'—'I would have you give me your advice,' says Booth, 'by what method I shall get rid of this dreadful woman without a discovery.'—'And do you really,' cries the other, 'desire to get rid of her?'—'Can you doubt it,' says Booth, 'after what I have communicated to you, and after what

‘ what you yourself have seen in my family? for I hope, notwithstanding this fatal slip, I do not appear to you in the light of a profligate.’— ‘ Well,’ answered James, ‘ and whatever light I may appear to you in, if you are really tired of the lady, and if she be really what you have represented her, I’ll endeavour to take her off your hands; but I insist upon it, that you do not deceive me in any particular.’ Booth protested in the most solemn manner, that every word which he had spoken was strictly true; and being asked whether he would give his honour never more to visit the lady, he assured James that he never would. He then, at his friend’s request, delivered him Miss Matthews’s letter, in which was a second direction to her lodgings; and declared to him, that if he could bring him safely out of this terrible affair, he should think himself to have a still higher obligation to his friendship, than any which he had already received from it.

Booth pressed the colonel to go home with him to dinner; but he excused himself, being, as he said, already engaged. However, he undertook in the afternoon to do all in his power, that Booth should receive no more alarms from the quarter of Miss Matthews, whom the colonel undertook to pay all the demands she had on his friend. They then separated: the colonel went to dinner at the King’s Arms, and Booth returned in high spirits to meet his Amelia.

The next day, early in the morning, the colonel came to the coffee-house, and sent for his friend, who lodged but at a little distance. The colonel told him he had a little exaggerated the lady’s beauty; however, he said, he excused that: ‘ for you might think perhaps,’ cries he, ‘ that your inconstancy to the finest woman in the world, might want some excuse. Be that as it will,’ said he, ‘ you may make yourself easy; as it will be, I am convinced, your own fault, if you have ever any farther molestation from Miss Matthews.’

Booth poured forth very warmly a great profusion of gratitude on this occasion; and nothing more anywise material passed at this interview, which

was very short; the colonel being in a great hurry, as he had, he said, some business of very great importance to transact that morning.

The colonel had now seen Booth twice, without remembering to give him the thirty pounds. This the latter imputed entirely to forgetfulness; for he had always found the promises of the former to be equal in value with the notes or bonds of other people. He was more surprized at what happened the next day; when meeting his friend in the Park, he received only a cold salute from him; and though he passed him five or six times, and the colonel was walking with a single officer of no great rank, and with whom he seemed in no earnest conversation; yet could not Booth, who was alone, obtain any farther notice from him.

This gave the poor man some alarm; though he could scarce persuade himself there was any design in all this coldness or forgetfulness. Once he imagined that he had lessened himself in the colonel’s opinion, by having discovered his inconstancy to Amelia; but the known character of the other, presently cured him of this suspicion, for he was a perfect libertine with regard to women; that being indeed the principal blemish in his character, which otherwise might have deserved much commendation for good-nature, generosity, and friendship. But he carried this one to a most unpardonable height: and made no scruple of openly declaring, that if he ever liked a woman well enough to be uneasy on her account, he would cure himself, if he could, by enjoying her, whatever might be the consequence.

Booth could not therefore be persuaded that the colonel would so highly resent, in another, a fault of which he was himself most notoriously guilty. After much consideration, he could derive this behaviour from nothing better than a capriciousness in his friend’s temper, from a kind of inconstancy of mind, which makes men grow weary of their friends, with no more reason than they often are of their mistresses. To say the truth, there are jilts in friendship as well as in love; and by the behaviour of some men in both, one would almost imagine that they industriously sought to

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gain the affections of others, with a view only of making the parties miserable.

This was the consequence of the colonel's behaviour to Booth. Former calamities had afflicted him; but this almost distracted him: and the more so, as he was not able well to account for such conduct, nor to conceive the least reason of it.

Amelia, at his return, presently perceived the disturbance in his mind, though he endeavoured with his utmost power to hide it; and he was at length prevailed upon by her entreaties to discover to her the cause of it; which she no sooner heard, than she applied as judicious a remedy to his disordered spirits, as either of those great mental physicians, Tully or Aristotle, could have thought of. She used many arguments to persuade him that he was in an error; and had mistaken forgetfulness and carelessness for a designed neglect.

But as this ptyfick was only eventually good, and as its efficacy depended on her being in the right, a point in which she was not apt to be too positive, she thought fit to add some consolation of a more certain and positive kind. 'Admit,' said she, 'my dear, that Mr. James should prove the unaccountable person you have suspected, and should, without being able to alledge any cause, withdraw his friendship from you, (for surely the accident of burning his letter is too trifling and ridiculous to mention) why should this grieve you? The obligations he hath conferred on you, I allow, ought to make his misfortunes almost your own; but they should not, I think, make you see his faults so very sensibly, especially when, by one of the greatest faults in the world committed against yourself, he hath considerably lessened all obligations: for sure, if the same person who hath contributed to my happiness at one time, doth every thing in his power maliciously and wantonly to make me miserable at another, I am very little obliged to such a person. And let it be a comfort to my dear Billy, that however other friends may prove false and fickle to him, he hath one friend, whom no inconstancy of her own, nor any change of his fortune, nor

time, nor age, nor sickness, nor any accident, can ever alter; but who will esteem, will love, and doat on him for ever.' So saying, she flung her snowy arms about his neck, and gave him a caress so tender, that it seemed almost to balance all the malice of his fate.

And, indeed, the behaviour of Amelia would have made him completely happy, in defiance of all adverse circumstances, had it not been for those bitter ingredients which he himself had thrown into his cup; and which prevented him from truly relishing Amelia's sweetness, by cruelly reminding him how unworthy he was of this excellent creature.

Booth did not long remain in the dark as to the conduct of James, which at first appeared to him to be so great a mystery; for this very afternoon he received a letter from Miss Matthews, which unravelled the whole affair. By this letter, which was full of bitterness and upbraiding, he discovered that James was his rival with that lady, and was, indeed, the identical person who had sent the hundred pound note to Miss Matthews, when in the prison. He had reason to believe, likewise, as well by the letter as by other circumstances, that James had hitherto been an unsuccessful lover: for the lady, though she had forfeited all title to virtue, had not yet so far forfeited all pretensions to delicacy, as to be, like the dirt in the street, indifferently common to all. She distributed her favours only to those she liked, in which number that gentleman had not the happiness of being included.

When Booth had made this discovery, he was not so little versed in human nature, as any longer to hesitate at the true motive to the colonel's conduct; for he well knew how odious a sight a happy rival is to an unfortunate lover. I believe he was, in reality, glad to assign the cold treatment he had received from his friend, to a cause which, however unjustifiable, is, at the same time, highly natural; and to acquit him of a levity, fickleness, and caprice, which he must have been unwillingly obliged to have seen in a much worse light.

He now resolved to take the first opportunity of accosting the colonel, and of coming to a perfect explanation upon

upon the whole matter. He debated likewise with himself, whether he should not throw himself at Amelia's feet, and confess a crime to her which he found so little hopes of concealing, and which he foresaw would occasion him so many difficulties and terrors to endeavour to conceal. Happy had it been for him, had he wisely pursued this step; since, in all probability, he would have received immediate forgiveness from the best of women! but he had not sufficient resolution; or, to speak, perhaps, more truly, he had too much pride to confess his guilt, and preferred the danger of the highest inconveniences, to the certainty of being put to the blush.

C H A P. VI.

IN WHICH MAY APPEAR, THAT
VIOLENCE IS SOMETIMES DONE
TO THE NAME OF LOVE.

WHEN that happy day came in which unhallowed hands are forbidden to contaminate the shoulders of the unfortunate, Booth went early to the colonel's house, and being admitted to his presence, began with great freedom, though with great gentleness, to complain of his not having dealt with him with more openness. 'Why, my dear colonel,' said he, 'would you not acquaint me with that secret which this letter hath disclosed?' James read the letter, at which his countenance changed more than once; and then, after a short silence, said, 'Mr. Booth, I have been to blame, I own it; and you upbraid me with justice. The true reason was, that I was ashamed of my own folly. D—n me, Booth! if I have not been a most consummate fool, a very dupe to this woman; and she hath a particular pleasure in making me so. I know what the impertinence of virtue is, and I can submit to it; but to be treated thus by a whore—you must forgive me, dear Booth; but your success was a kind of triumph over me which I could not bear. I own, I have not the least reason to conceive any anger against you; and yet, curse me! if I should not have been

less displeased at your lying with my own wife; nay, I could almost have parted with half my fortune to you more willingly, than have suffered you to receive that trifle of my money which you received at her hands. However, I ask your pardon; and I promise you, I will never more think of you with the least ill-will, on the account of this woman: but as for her, d—n me, if I do not enjoy her by some means or other, whatever it costs me; for I am already above two hundred pounds out of pocket, without having scarce had a smile in return.'

Booth expressed much astonishment at this declaration; he said, he could not conceive how it was possible to have such an affection for a woman, who did not shew the least inclination to return it. James gave her a hearty curse; and said, 'Pox of her inclination! I want only the possession of her person; and that you will allow is a very fine one. But, besides my passion for her, she hath now piqued my pride; for how can a man of my fortune brook being refused by a whore?'—'Since you are so set on the business,' cries Booth, ' (you will excuse my saying so) I fancy you had better change your method of applying to her: for, as she is, perhaps, the vainest woman upon earth, your bounty may probably do you little service; nay, may rather actually disoblige her. Vanity is plainly her predominant passion, and if you will administer to that, it will infallibly throw her into your arms. To this I attribute my own unfortunate success. While she relieved my wants and distresses, she was daily feeding her own vanity; whereas, as every gift of yours asserted your superiority, it rather offended than pleased her. Indeed, women generally love to be of the obliging side; and if we examine their favourites, we shall find them to be much oftener such as they have conferred obligations on, than such as they have received them from.'

There was something in this speech which pleased the colonel; and he said with a smile, 'I don't know how it is, Will; but you know women better than I.'—'Perhaps, colonel,' answered

answered Booth, 'I have studied their minds more.—I don't however much envy you your knowledge,' replied the other: 'for I never think their minds worth considering. However, I hope I shall profit a little by your experience with Miss Matthews. Damnation seize the proud insolent harlot! the devil take me, if I don't love her more than I ever loved a woman!'

The rest of their conversation turned on Booth's affairs. The colonel again re-assumed the part of a friend, gave him the remainder of the money, and promised to take the first opportunity of laying his memorial before a great man.

Booth was greatly overjoyed at this success. Nothing now lay on his mind, but to conceal his frailty from Amelia, to whom he was afraid Miss Matthews, in the rage of her resentment, would communicate it. This apprehension made him stay almost constantly at home; and he trembled at every knock at the door. His fear moreover betrayed him into a meanness which he would have heartily despised on any other occasion. This was, to order the maid to deliver him any letter directed to Amelia, at the same time strictly charging her not to acquaint her mistress with her having received any such orders.

A servant of any acuteness would have formed strange conjectures from such an injunction; but this poor girl was of perfect simplicity: so great indeed was her simplicity, that had not Amelia been void of all suspicion of her husband, the maid would have soon after betrayed her master.

One afternoon while they were drinking tea, little Betty, so was the maid called, came into the room; and calling her master forth, delivered him a card which was directed to Amelia. Booth having read the card, on his return into the room, chid the girl for calling him, saying, 'If you can read, child, you must see it was directed to your mistress.' To this the girl answered pertly enough: 'I am sure, Sir, you ordered me to bring every letter first to you.' This hint, with many women, would have been sufficient to have blown up the whole affair; but Amelia, who heard

what the girl said, through the medium of love and confidence, saw the matter in a much better light than it deserved; and looking tenderly on her husband, said, 'Indeed, my love, I must blame you for a conduct, which perhaps, I ought rather to praise, as it proceeds only from the extreme tenderness of your affection. But, why will you endeavour to keep any secrets from me! believe me, for my own sake, you ought not: for as you cannot hide the consequences, you make me always suspect ten times worse than the reality. While I have you and my children well before my eyes, I am capable of facing any news which can arrive: for what ill news can come (unless, indeed, it concerns my little babe in the country) which doth not relate to the badness of our circumstances? and those, I thank Heaven, we have now a fair prospect of retrieving! Besides, dear Billy, though my understanding be much inferior to yours, I have sometimes had the happiness of luckily hitting on some argument which hath afforded you comfort. This you know, my dear, was the case with regard to Colonel James, whom I persuaded you to think you had mistaken, and you see the event proved me in the right.' So happily, both for herself and Mr. Booth, did the excellence of this good woman's disposition deceive her, and force her to see every thing in the most advantageous light to her husband.

The card being now inspected, was found to contain the compliments of Mrs. James to Mrs. Booth, with an account of her being arrived in town, and having brought with her a very great cold. Amelia was everjoyed at the news of her arrival; and having dressed herself in the utmost hurry, left her children to the care of her husband, and ran away to pay her respects to her friend, whom she loved with a most sincere affection. But how was she disappointed, when, eager with the utmost impatience, and exulting with the thoughts of presently seeing her beloved friend, she was answered at the door that the lady was not at home! nor could she, upon telling her name, obtain any admission. This, considering the account she had received of the

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the lady's cold, greatly surprized her; and she returned home very much vexed at her disappointment.

Amelia, who had no suspicion that Mrs. James was really at home, and as the phrase is, was denied, would have made a second visit the next morning, had she not been prevented by a cold, which she herself now got, and which was attended with a slight fever. This confined her several days to her house, during which Booth officiated as her nurse, and never stirred from her.

In all this time she heard not a word from Mrs. James, which gave her some uneasiness, but more astonishment. The tenth day, when she was perfectly recovered, about nine in the evening, when she and her husband were just going to supper, she heard a most violent thundering at the door, and presently after a rustling of silk upon her stair-case; at the same time a female voice cried out pretty loud, 'Bless me! what, am I to climb up another pair of stairs?' upon which Amelia, who well knew the voice, presently ran to the door, and ushered in Mrs. James most splendidly dressed; who put on as formal a countenance, and made as formal a curtsy to her old friend, as if she had been her very distant acquaintance.

Poor Amelia, who was going to rush into her friend's arms, was struck motionless by this behaviour; but recollecting her spirits, as she had an excellent presence of mind, she presently understood what the lady meant, and resolved to treat her in her own way. Down therefore the company sat, and silence prevailed for some time; during which Mrs. James surveyed the room with more attention than she would have bestowed on one much finer. At length the conversation began, in which the weather and the diversions of the town were well canvassed. Amelia, who was a woman of great humour, performed her part to admiration; so that a by-stander would have doubted, in every other article than dress, which of the two was the most accomplished fine lady.

After a visit of twenty minutes, during which, not a word of any former occurrences was mentioned, nor indeed

any subject of discourse started, except only those two abovementioned, Mrs. James rose from her chair, and retired in the same formal manner in which she had approached. We will pursue her, for the sake of the contrast, during the rest of the evening. She went from Amelia directly to a route, where she spent two hours in a crowd of company, talked again and again over the diversions and news of the town, played two rubbers at whist, and then retired to her own apartment, where, having passed another hour in undressing herself, she went to her own bed.

Booth and his wife, the moment their companion was gone, sat down to supper on a piece of cold meat, the remains of their dinner. After which, over a pint of wine, they entertained themselves for a while with the ridiculous behaviour of their visitant. But Amelia declaring she rather saw her as the object of pity than anger, turned the discourse to pleasanter topics. The little actions of their children, the former scenes and future prospects of their life, furnished them with many pleasant ideas, and the contemplation of Amelia's recovery threw Booth into raptures. At length they retired, happy in each other.

It is possible some readers may be no less surprized at the behaviour of Mrs. James, than was Amelia herself, since they may have perhaps received so favourable an impression of that lady from the account given of her by Mr. Booth, that her present demeanour may seem unnatural, and inconsistent with her former character. But they will be pleased to consider the great alteration in her circumstances, from a state of dependency on a brother, who was himself no better than a soldier of fortune, to that of being wife to a man of a very large estate, and considerable rank in life. And what was her present behaviour more than that of a fine lady, who considered form and show as essential ingredients of human happiness, and imagined all friendship to consist in ceremony, courtesies, messages, and visits? In which opinion she hath the honour to think with much the greater part of one sex, and no small number of the other.

CHAP. VII.

CONTAINING A VERY EXTRAORDINARY AND PLEASANT INCIDENT.

THE next evening Booth and Amelia went to walk in the park with their children. They were now on the verge of the parade, and Booth was describing to his wife the several buildings round it; when, on a sudden, Amelia missing her little boy, cried out, 'Where's little Billy?' upon which, Booth casting his eyes over the grass, saw a foot-soldier, shaking the boy at a little distance. At this sight, without making any answer to his wife, he leapt over the rails, and running directly up to the fellow, who had a firelock with a bayonet fixed in his hand, he seized him by the collar, and tripped up his heels, and at the same time wrested his arms from him. A serjeant upon duty seeing the affray at some distance, ran presently up, and being told what had happened, gave the centinel a hearty curse, and told him he deserved to be hanged. A by-stander gave this information; for Booth was returned with his little boy to meet Amelia, who staggered towards him as fast as she could, all pale and breathless, and scarce able to support her tottering limbs. The serjeant now came up to Booth, to make an apology for the behaviour of the soldier, when of a sudden he turned almost as pale as Amelia herself. He stood silent whilst Booth was employed in comforting and recovering his wife; and then addressing himself to him, said, 'Bless me, lieutenant! could I imagine it had been your honour; and was it my little master that the rascal used so! I am glad I did not know it, for I should certainly have run my halbert into him.'

Booth presently recognized his old faithful servant Atkinson, and gave him a hearty greeting; saying, he was very glad to see him in his present situation. 'Whatever I am,' answered the serjeant, 'I shall always think I owe it to your honour.' Then taking the little boy by the hand, he cried, 'What a vast fine young gentleman master is grown!' and cursing the soldier's inhumanity, swore

heartily he would make him pay for it.

As Amelia was much disordered with her fright, she did not recollect her foster-brother, till he was introduced to her by Booth; but she no sooner knew him, than she bestowed a most obliging smile on him; and calling him by the name of honest Joe, said she was heartily glad to see him in England. 'See, my dear,' cries Booth, 'what preferment your old friend is come to. You would scarce know him, I believe, in his present state of finery.'—'I am very well pleased to see it,' answered Amelia; 'and I with him joy of being made an officer, with all my heart.' In fact, from what Mr. Booth said, joined to the serjeant's laced coat, she believed that he had obtained a commission. So weak and absurd is human vanity, that this mistake of Amelia's possibly put poor Atkinson out of countenance; for he looked at this instant more silly than he had ever done in his life; and making her a most respectful bow, muttered something about obligations, in a scarce articulate or intelligible manner.

The serjeant had, indeed, among many other qualities, that modesty which a Latin author honours by the name of ingenuous: nature had given him this, notwithstanding the meanness of his birth; and six years conversation in the army had not taken it away. To say the truth, he was a noble fellow; and Amelia, by supposing he had a commission in the guards, had been guilty of no affront to that honourable body.

Booth had a real affection for Atkinson, though in fact he knew not half his merit. He acquainted him with his lodgings, where he earnestly desired to see him.

Amelia, who was far from being recovered from the terrors into which the seeing her husband engaged with the soldier had thrown her, desired to go home; nor was she well able to walk without some assistance. While she supported herself therefore on her husband's arm, she told Atkinson, she should be obliged to him, if he would take care of the children. He readily accepted the office; but, upon offering his hand to Miss, she refused, and burst into tears. Upon which, the tender mother resigned Booth to her children, and put

put herself under the serjeant's protection; who conducted her safe home, though she often declared she feared she should drop down by the way. The fear of which so affected the serjeant, (for besides the honour which he himself had for the lady, he knew how tenderly his friend loved her) that he was unable to speak; and had not his nerves been so strongly braced, that nothing could shake them, he had enough in his mind to have set them a trembling equally with the lady.

When they arrived at the lodgings, the mistress of the house opened the door, who, seeing Amelia's condition, threw open the parlour, and begged her to walk in; upon which she immediately flung herself into a chair, and all present thought she would have fainted away. However, she escaped that misery; and having drank a glass of water with a little white wine mixed in it, she began, in a little time, to regain her complexion; and at length assured Booth that she was perfectly recovered; but declared she had never undergone so much, and earnestly begged him never to be so rash for the future. She then called her little boy, and gently chid him; saying, 'You must never do so more, Billy; you see what mischief you might have brought upon your father; and what you have made me suffer.'—'La, mamma!' said the child; 'what harm did I do? I did not know that people might not walk in the green fields in London. I am sure if I did a fault, the man punished me enough for it; for he pinched me almost through my slender arm.' He then bared his little arm, which was greatly discoloured by the injury it had received. Booth uttered a most dreadful execration at this sight; and the serjeant, who was now present, did the like.

Atkinson now returned to his guard, and went directly to the officer to acquaint him with the soldier's inhumanity; but he, who was about fifteen years of age, gave the serjeant a great curse, and said the soldier had done very well, for that idle boys ought to be corrected. This however did not satisfy poor Atkinson, who the next day, as soon as the guard was relieved, beat the fellow most unmercifully, and told him he would remember him as long as he staid in the regiment.

Thus ended this trifling adventure, which some readers will, perhaps, be pleased with seeing related at full length. None, I think, can fail drawing one observation from it; namely, how capable the most insignificant accident is of disturbing human happiness, and of producing the most unexpected and dreadful events. A reflection which may serve to many moral and religious uses.

This accident produced the first acquaintance between the mistress of the house and her lodgers; for hitherto they had scarce exchanged a word together. But the great concern which the good woman had shewn on Amelia's account at this time, was not likely to pass unobserved, or unthanked either, by the husband or wife. Amelia, therefore, as soon as she was able to go up stairs, invited Mrs. Ellison (for that was her name) to her apartment, and desired the favour of her to stay to supper. She readily complied; and they passed a very agreeable evening together, in which the two women seemed to have conceived a most extraordinary liking to each other.

Though beauty in general doth not greatly recommend one woman to another, as it is too apt to create envy; yet, in cases where this passion doth not interfere, a fine woman is often a pleasing object even to some of her own sex: especially when her beauty is attended with a certain air of affability, as was that of Amelia in the highest degree. She was, indeed, a most charming woman; and I know not whether the little scar on her nose did not rather add to than diminish her beauty.

Mrs. Ellison therefore was as much charmed with the loveliness of her fair lodger, as with all her other engaging qualities. She was, indeed, so taken with Amelia's beauty, that she could not refrain from crying out in a kind of transport of admiration, 'Upon my word, Captain Booth, you are the happiest man in the world: your lady is so extremely handsome, that one cannot look at her without pleasure!'—

This good woman herself had none of these attractive charms to the eye. Her person was short, and immoderately fat; her features were none of the most regular; and her complexion (if indeed

indeed she ever had a good one) had considerably suffered by time.

Her good-humour and complaisance, however, were highly pleasing to Amelia. Nay, why should we conceal the secret satisfaction which that lady felt from the compliments paid to her person? since such of my readers as like her best, will not be sorry to find that she was a woman.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTAINING VARIOUS MATTERS.

A Fortnight had now passed, since Booth had seen or heard from the colonel; which did not a little surprize him, as they had parted so good friends, and as he had so cordially undertaken his cause concerning the memorial, on which all his hopes depended.

The uneasiness which this gave him, farther encreased, on finding that his friend refused to see him: for he had paid the colonel a visit at nine in the morning, and was told, he was not stirring; and at his return back an hour afterwards, the servant said, his master was gone out: of which Booth was certain of the falshood; for he had, during that whole hour, walked backwards and forwards within sight of the colonel's door, and must have seen him if he had gone out within that time.

The good colonel, however, did not long suffer his friend to continue in this deplorable state of anxiety; for the very next morning Booth received his memorial inclosed in a letter, acquainting him that Mr. James had mentioned his affair to the person he proposed; but that the great man had so many engagements on his hands, that it was impossible for him to make any farther promises at this time.

The cold and distant style of this letter, and indeed the whole behaviour of James, so different from what it had been formerly, had something so mysterious in it, that it greatly puzzled and perplexed poor Booth; and it was so long before he was able to solve it, that the reader's curiosity will, perhaps, be obliged to us for not leaving him so long in the dark as to this matter. The true reason then of the colonel's conduct was this: his unbounded genero-

sity, together with the unbounded extravagance, and consequently the great necessity of Miss Matthews, had at length overcome the cruelty of that lady, with whom he likewise had luckily no rival. Above all, the desire of being revenged on Booth, with whom she was to the highest degree enraged, had perhaps contributed not a little to his success: for she had no sooner condescended to a familiarity with her new lover, and discovered that Captain James, of whom she had heard so much from Booth, was no other than the identical colonel, than she employed every art of which she was mistress, to make an utter breach of friendship between these two. For this purpose, she did not scruple to insinuate, that the colonel was not at all obliged to the character given of him by his friend; and to the account of this latter she placed most of the cruelty which she had shewn to the former.

Had the colonel made a proper use of his reason, and fairly examined the probability of the fact, he could scarce have been imposed upon to believe a matter so inconsistent with all he knew of Booth, and in which that gentleman must have sinned against all the laws of honour without any visible temptation. But in solemn fact, the colonel was so intoxicated with his love, that it was in the power of his mistress to have persuaded him of any thing; besides, he had an interest in giving her credit: for he was not a little pleased with finding a reason for hating the man, whom he could not help hating without any reason, at least, without any which he durst fairly assign even to himself. Henceforth therefore he abandoned all friendship for Booth, and was more inclined to put him out of the world, than to endeavour any longer at supporting him in it.

Booth communicated this letter to his wife, who endeavoured, as usual, to the utmost of her power, to console him under one of the greatest afflictions which, I think, can befall a man; namely, the unkindness of a friend; but he had luckily at the same time the greatest blessing in his possession, the kindness of a faithful and beloved wife. A blessing, however, which, though it compensates most of the evils of life, rather serves to aggravate the misfortune.

tune of distressed circumstances, from the consideration of the share which she is to bear in them.

This afternoon Amelia received a second visit from Mrs. Ellison; who acquainted her that she had a present of a ticket for the oratorio, which would carry two persons into the gallery; and therefore begged the favour of her company thither.

Amelia with many thanks acknowledged the civility of Mrs. Ellison, but declined accepting her offer; upon which, Booth very strenuously insisted on her going, and said to her, 'My dear, if you knew the satisfaction I have in any of your pleasures, I am convinced you would not refuse the favour Mrs. Ellison is so kind to offer you; for as you are a lover of music, you, who have never been at an oratorio, cannot conceive how you will be delighted.'—'I well know your goodness, my dear,' answered Amelia; 'but I cannot think of leaving my children without some person more proper to take care of them than this poor girl.' Mrs. Ellison removed this objection, by offering her own servant, a very discreet matron, to attend them; but notwithstanding this, and all she could say, with the assistance of Booth, and of the children themselves, Amelia still persisted in her refusal; and the mistress of the house, who knew how far good-breeding allows persons to be pressing on these occasions, took her leave.

She was no sooner departed, than Amelia, looking tenderly on her husband, said, 'How can you, my dear creature, think that music hath any charms for me at this time! Or, indeed, do you believe that I am capable of any sensation worthy the name of pleasure, when neither you nor my children are present, or bear any part of it?'

An officer of the regiment to which Booth had formerly belonged, hearing from Atkinson where he lodged, now came to pay him a visit. He told him, that several of their old acquaintance were to meet the next Wednesday at a tavern, and very strongly pressed him to be one of the company. Booth was, in truth, what is called a hearty fellow, and loved now and then to take a cheerful glass with his friends; but he excused himself at this time. His

friend declared he would take no denial; and he growing very importunate, Amelia at length seconded him. Upon this Booth answered, 'Well, my dear, since you desire me, I will comply; but on one condition, that you go at the same time to the oratorio.' Amelia thought this request reasonable enough, and gave her consent; of which Mrs. Ellison presently received the news, and with great satisfaction.

It may, perhaps, be asked, why Booth could go to the tavern, and not to the oratorio with his wife. In truth, then, the tavern was within hallowed ground, that is to say, in the verge of the court; for of five officers that were to meet there, three, besides Booth, were confined to that air, which hath been always found extremely wholesome to a broken military constitution. And here, if the good reader will pardon the pun, he will scarce be offended at the observation; since, how is it possible that, without running in debt, any person should maintain the dress and appearance of a gentleman, whose income is not half so good as that of a porter? It is true, that this allowance, small as it is, is a great expence to the public; but if several more unnecessary charges were spared, the public might, perhaps, bear a little increase of this without much feeling it. They would not, I am sure, have equal reason to complain at contributing to the maintenance of a set of brave fellows, who, at the hazard of their health, their limbs and their lives, have maintained the safety and honour of their country; as when they find themselves taxed to the support of a set of drones, who have not the least merit or claim to their favour; and who, without contributing in any manner to the good of the hive, live luxuriously on the labours of the industrious bee.

CHAP. IX.

IN WHICH AMELIA, WITH HER FRIEND, GOES TO THE ORATORIO.

NOTHING happened between the Monday and the Wednesday, worthy a place in this history. Upon the evening of the latter, the two ladies went

went to the oratorio, and were there time enough to get the first row in the gallery. Indeed there was only one person in the house when they came: for Amelia's inclinations, when she gave a loose to them, were pretty eager for this diversion, she being a great lover of music, and particularly of Mr. Handel's compositions. Mrs. Ellifson was, I suppose, a great lover likewise of music, for she was the more impatient of the two; which was rather the more extraordinary, as these entertainments were not such novelties to her as they were to poor Amelia.

Though our ladies arrived full two hours before they saw the back of Mr. Handel; yet this time of expectation did not hang extremely heavy on their hands; for besides their own chat, they had the company of a gentleman, whom they found at their first arrival in the gallery; and who, though plainly, or rather roughly dressed, very luckily for the women, happened to be not only well-bred, but a person of very lively conversation. The gentleman on his part seemed highly charmed with Amelia, and in fact was so: for, though he restrained himself entirely within the rules of good-breeding, yet was he in the highest degree officious to catch at every opportunity of shewing his respect, and doing her little services. He procured her a book and wax-candle, and held the candle for her himself during the whole entertainment.

At the end of the oratorio, he declared he would not leave the ladies till he had seen them safe into their chairs or coach; and at the same time very earnestly entreated that he might have the honour of waiting on them. Upon which Mrs. Ellifson, who was a very good-humoured woman, answered, 'Ay, sure, Sir, if you please: you have been very obliging to us; and a dish of tea shall be at your service at any time:' and then told him where she lived.

The ladies were no sooner seated in their hackney-coach, than Mrs. Ellifson burst into a loud laughter, and cried, 'I'll be hanged, Madam, if you have not made a conquest to-night; and what is very pleasant, I believe the poor gentleman takes you for a single lady!'—'Nay,' answered Amelia, very gravely, 'I protest I began to think at last he was rather too parti-

cular, though he did not venture at a word that I could be offended at; but if you fancy any such thing, I am sorry you invited him to drink tea.'—'Why so?' replied Mrs. Ellifson: 'are you angry with a man for liking you? if you are, you will be angry with almost every man that sees you. If I was a man myself, I declare I should be in the number of your admirers. Poor gentleman! I pity him heartily; he little knows that you have not a heart to dispose of. For my own part, I should not be surprized at seeing a serious proposal of marriage; for I am convinced he is a man of fortune, not only by the politeness of his address, but by the fineness of his linen, and that valuable diamond-ring on his finger. But you will see more of him when he comes to tea.'—'Indeed I shall not,' answered Amelia; 'though I believe you only rally me: I hope you have a better opinion of me, than to think I would go willingly into the company of a man, who had an improper liking for me.' Mrs. Ellifson, who was one of the gayest women in the world, repeated the words *improper liking* with a laugh; and cried, 'My dear Mrs. Booth, believe me, you are too handsome and too good-humoured for a prude. How can you affect being offended at what I am convinced is the greatest pleasure of womankind; and chiefly, I believe, of us virtuous women? for, I assure you, notwithstanding my gaiety, I am as virtuous as any prude in Europe.'—'Far be it from me, Madam,' said Amelia, 'to suspect the contrary of a bundance of women, who indulge themselves in much greater freedoms than I should take, or have any pleasure in taking: for I solemnly protest, if I know my own heart, the liking of all men, but of one, is a matter quite indifferent to me, or rather would be highly disagreeable.'

This discourse brought them home; where Amelia finding her children asleep, and her husband not returned, invited her companion to partake of her homely fare, and down they sat to supper together. The clock struck twelve; and no news being arrived of Booth, Mrs. Ellifson began to express some astonishment at his stay, whence she launched into a general reflection on husbands,

husbands, and soon passed to some particular invectives on her own. 'Ah, my dear Madam,' says she, 'I know the present state of your mind by what I have myself often felt formerly. I am no stranger to the melancholy tone of a midnight clock. It was my misfortune to drag on a heavy chain of above fifteen years, with a sottish yoke-fellow. But how can I wonder at my fate, since I see even your superior charms cannot confine a husband from the bewitching pleasures of a bottle.'—'Indeed, Madam,' says Amelia, 'I have no reason to complain, Mr. Booth is one of the soberest of men; but now and then to spend a late hour with his friend, is, I think, highly excusable.'—'O, no doubt,' cries Mrs. Ellison, 'if he can excuse himself; but if I was a man——' Here Booth came in, and interrupted the discourse. Amelia's eyes flashed with joy the moment he appeared; and he discovered no less pleasure in seeing her. His spirits were indeed a little elevated with wine, so as to heighten his good-humour, without in the least disordering his understanding, and made him such delightful company, that though it was past one in the morning, neither his wife nor Mrs. Ellison thought of their beds during a whole hour.

Early the next morning the serjeant came to Mr. Booth's lodgings, and with a melancholy countenance acquainted him, that he had been the night before at an alehouse, where he heard one Mr. Murphy an attorney declare, that he would get a warrant backed against one Captain Booth at the next board of green-cloth. 'I hope, Sir,' said he, 'your honour will pardon me; but by what he said, I was afraid he meant your honour; and therefore I thought it my duty to tell you, for I knew the same thing happen to a gentleman here the other day.'

Booth gave Mr. Atkinson many thanks for his information. 'I doubt not,' said he, 'but I am the person meant; for it would be foolish in me to deny that I am liable to apprehensions of that sort.'—'I hope, Sir,' said the serjeant, 'your honour will soon have reason to fear no man living; but in the mean time, if any accident should happen, my bail is at

your service as far as it will go; and I am a housekeeper, and can swear myself worth one hundred pounds.' Which hearty and friendly declaration received all those acknowledgments from Booth which it really deserved.

The poor gentleman was greatly alarmed at this news; but he was altogether as much surprized at Murphy's being the attorney employed against him, as all his debts, except only to Captain James, arose in the country, where he did not know that Mr. Murphy had any acquaintance. However, he made no doubt that he was the person intended, and resolved to remain a close prisoner in his own lodgings, till he saw the event of a proposal which had been made him the evening before at the tavern, where an honest gentleman, who had a post under the government, and who was one of the company, had promised to serve him with the secretary at war; telling him, that he made no doubt of procuring him whole pay in a regiment abroad, which in his present circumstances was very highly worth his acceptance; when indeed that, and a gaol, seemed to be the only alternatives that offered themselves to his choice.

Mr. Booth and his lady spent that afternoon with Mrs. Ellison. An incident which we should scarce have mentioned, had it not been that Amelia gave, on this occasion, an instance of that prudence which should never be off its guard in married women of delicacy: for before she would consent to drink tea with Mrs. Ellison, she made conditions, that the gentleman who had met them at the oratorio should not be let in. Indeed, this circumstance proved unnecessary in the present instance, for no such visitor ever came; a circumstance which gave great content to Amelia: for that lady had been a little uneasy at the raillery of Mrs. Ellison, and had upon reflection magnified every little compliment made her, and every little civility shewn her by the unknown gentleman, far beyond the truth. These imaginations now all subsided again; and she imputed all that Mrs. Ellison had said, either to raillery or mistake.

A young lady made a fourth with them at whist, and likewise stayed the whole evening. Her name was Bennet. She was about the age of five

and

and twenty; but sickness had given her an older look, and had a good deal diminished her beauty; of which, young as she was, she plainly appeared to have only the remains in her present possession. She was in one particular the very reverse of Mrs. Ellifson, being altogether as remarkably grave as the other was gay. This gravity was not however attended with any sourness of temper: on the contrary, she had much sweetness in her countenance, and was perfectly well-bred. In short, Amelia imputed her grave deportment to her ill health, and began to entertain a compassion for her, which in good minds, that is to say, in minds capable of compassion, is certain to introduce some little degree of love or friendship.

Amelia was in short so pleased with the conversation of this lady, that, though a woman of no impertinent curiosity, she could not help taking the first opportunity of enquiring who she was. Mrs. Ellifson said, that she was an unhappy lady, who had married a young clergyman for love, who dying of a consumption, had left her a widow in very indifferent circumstances. This account made Amelia still pity her more, and consequently added to the liking which she had already conceived for her. Amelia therefore desired Mrs. Ellifson to bring her acquainted with Mrs. Bennet, and said she would go any day with her to make that lady a visit. 'There need be no ceremony,' cried Mrs. Ellifson, 'she is a woman of no form: and as I saw plainly she was extremely pleased with Mrs. Booth, I am convinced I can bring her to drink tea with you any afternoon you please.'

The two next days Booth continued at home, highly to the satisfaction of his Amelia, who really knew no happiness out of his company, nor scarce any misery in it. She had, indeed, at all times so much of his company when in his power, that she had no occasion to assign any particular reason for his staying with her, and consequently it could give her no cause of suspicion. The Saturday one of her children was a little disordered with a feverish complaint, which confined her to her room, and prevented her drinking tea in the afternoon with her hus-

band, in Mrs. Ellifson's apartment, where a noble lord, a cousin of Mrs. Ellifson's, happened to be present: for though that lady was reduced in her circumstances, and obliged to let out part of her house in lodgings, she was born of a good family, and had some considerable relations.

His lordship was not himself in any office of state; but his fortune gave him great authority with those who were. Mrs. Ellifson, therefore, very bluntly took an opportunity of recommending Booth to his consideration. She took the first hint from my lord's calling the gentleman captain — to which she answered, 'Aye, I wish your lordship would make him so. It would be but an act of justice, and I know it is in your power to do much greater things.' She then mentioned Booth's services, and the wounds he had received at the siege, of which she had heard a faithful account from Amelia. Booth blushed, and was as silent as a young virgin at the hearing her own praises. His lordship answered, 'Cousin Ellifson, you know you may command my interest; nay, I shall have a pleasure in serving one of Mr. Booth's character: for my part, I think merit in all capacities ought to be encouraged; but I know the ministry are greatly pestered with solicitations at this time. However, Mr. Booth may be assured I will take the first opportunity; and, in the mean time, I shall be glad of seeing him any morning he pleases.' For all these declarations, Booth was not wanting in acknowledgments to the generous peer, any more than he was in secret gratitude to the lady who had shewn so friendly and uncommon a zeal in his favour.

The reader, when he knows the character of this nobleman, may, perhaps, conclude that his seeing Booth alone was a lucky circumstance; for he was so passionate an admirer of women, that he could scarce have escaped the attraction of Amelia's beauty. And few men, as I have observed, have such disinterested generosity, as to serve a husband the better because they are in love with his wife, unless he will condescend to pay a price beyond the reach of a virtuous woman.



A M E L I A.

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL
MEET WITH AN OLD ACQUAIN-
TANCE.



BOOTH's affairs were putting on a better aspect than they had ever worn before, and he was willing to make use of the opportunity of one day in seven to taste the fresh air.

At nine in the morning he went to pay a visit to his old friend Colonel James, resolving, if possible, to have a full explanation of that behaviour which appeared to him so mysterious; but the colonel was as inaccessible as the best defended fortress; and it was as impossible for Booth to pass beyond his entry, as the Spaniards found it to take Gibraltar. He received the usual answers: first, that the colonel was not stirring; and, an hour after, that he was gone out. All that he got by asking farther questions, was only to receive still ruder and ruder answers; by which, if he had been very sagacious, he might have been satisfied how little worth his while it was to desire to go in: for the porter at a great man's door, is a kind of thermometer, by which you may discover the warmth or coldness of his master's friendship. Nay, in the highest stations of all, as the great man himself hath his different kinds of salutation, from an hearty embrace with a kiss, and 'My dear lord,' or 'Dear Sir Charles,' down

to, 'Well, Mr. —, what would you have me do?' so the porter, to some bows with respect, to others with a smile, to some he bows more, to others less low, to others not at all. Some he just lets in, and others he just shuts out. And in all this they so well correspond, that one would be inclined to think that the great man and his porter had compared their lists together, and like two actors concerned to act different parts in the same scene, had rehearsed their parts privately together before they ventured to perform in publick.

Though Booth did not, perhaps, see the whole matter in this just light, for that in reality it is, yet he was discerning enough to conclude from the behaviour of the servant, especially when he considered that of the master likewise, that he had entirely lost the friendship of James; and this conviction gave him a concern, that not only the flattering prospect of his lordship's favour was not able to compensate, but which even obliterated, and made him for a while forget the situation in which he had left his Amelia; and he wandered about almost two hours, scarce knowing where he went, till at last he dropped into a coffee-house near St. James's, where he sat himself down.

He had scarce drank his dish of coffee, before he heard a young officer of the Guards cry to another, 'Od, d—n me, Jack, here he comes—here's old 'honour and dignity, faith!' Upon which he saw a chair open, and out issued

a most erect and stately figure indeed, with a vast perriwig on his head, and a vast hat under his arm. This august personage, having entered the room, walked directly up to the upper end, where having paid his respects to all present, of any note, to each according to seniority, he at last cast his eyes on Booth, and very civilly, though somewhat coolly, asked him how he did.

Booth, who had long recognized the features of his old acquaintance Major Bath, returned the compliment with a very low bow; but did not venture to make the first advance to familiarity, as he was truly possessed of that quality which the Greeks considered in the highest light of honour, and which we term modesty; though, indeed, neither ours nor the Latin language hath any word adequate to the idea of the original.

The colonel, after having discharged himself of two or three articles of news, and made his comments upon them, when the next chair to him became vacant, called upon Booth to fill it. He then asked him several questions relating to his affairs; and, when he heard he was out of the army, advised him earnestly to use all means to get in again; saying, that he was a pretty lad, and they must not lose him.

Booth told him in a whisper, that he had a great deal to say to him on that subject, if they were in a more private place; upon this, the colonel proposed a walk in the Park, which the other readily accepted.

During their walk, Booth opened his heart, and among other matters acquainted Colonel Bath, that he feared he had lost the friendship of Colonel James; 'though I am not,' said he, 'conscious of having done the least thing to deserve it.'

Bath answered, 'You are certainly mistaken, Mr. Booth. I have, indeed, scarce seen my brother since my coming to town; for I have been here but two days; however, I am convinced he is a man of too nice honour to do any thing inconsistent with the true dignity of a gentleman.' Booth answered, he was far from accusing him of any thing dishonourable. 'D—n me,' said Bath, 'if there is a man alive can or dare accuse him: if you have the least reason to take any thing ill, why don't you go to him?

'You are a gentleman, and his rank doth not protect him from giving you satisfaction.'—The affair is not of any such kind,' says Booth; 'I have great obligations to the colonel, and have more reason to lament than complain; and if I could but see him, I am convinced I should have no cause for either; but I cannot get within his house: it was but an hour ago, a servant of his turned me rudely from the door.'—Did a servant of my brother use you rudely?' said the colonel with the utmost gravity. 'I do not know, Sir, in what light you see such things; but to me the affront of a servant is the affront of the master; and if he doth not immediately punish it, by all the dignity of a man, I would see the master's nose between my fingers.' Booth offered to explain, but to no purpose; the colonel was got into his stilts, and it was impossible to take him down; nay, it was as much as Booth could possibly do, to part with him without an actual quarrel; nor would he, perhaps, have been able to have accomplished it, had not the colonel by accident turned at last to take Booth's side of the question: and before they separated, he swore many oaths that James should give him proper satisfaction.

Such was the end of this present interview, so little to the content of Booth, that he was heartily concerned he had ever mentioned a syllable of the matter to his honourable friend.

C H A P. II.

IN WHICH BOOTH PAYS A VISIT TO THE NOBLE LORD.

WHEN that day of the week returned, in which Mr. Booth chose to walk abroad, he went to wait on the noble peer according to his kind invitation.

Booth now found a very different reception with this great man's porter, from what he had met with at his friend the colonel's. He no sooner told his name, than the porter with a bow told him his lordship was at home; the door immediately flew wide open; and he was conducted to an anti-chamber, where a servant told him he would acquaint his lordship with his arrival.

Nor

Nor did he wait many minutes before the same servant returned, and ushered him to his lordship's apartment.

He found my lord alone, and was received by him in the most courteous manner imaginable. After the first ceremonials were over, his lordship began in the following words: 'Mr. Booth, I do assure you, you are very much obliged to my cousin Ellison. She hath given you such a character, that I shall have a pleasure in doing any thing in my power to serve you. But it will be very difficult, I am afraid, to get you a rank at home. In the West-Indies, perhaps, or in some regiment abroad, it may be more easy; and when I consider your reputation as a soldier, I make no doubt of your readiness to go to any place where the service of your country shall call you.' Booth answered, that he was highly obliged to his lordship, and assured him, he would with great cheerfulness attend his duty in any part of the world. 'The only thing grievous in the exchange of countries,' said he, 'in my opinion, is to leave those I love behind me, and I am sure I shall never have a second trial equal to my first. It was very hard, my lord, to leave a young wife big with her first child, and so affected with my absence, that I had the utmost reason to despair of ever seeing her more. After such a demonstration of my resolution to sacrifice every other consideration to my duty, I hope your lordship will honour me with some confidence, that I shall make no objection to serve in any country.'—'My dear Mr. Booth,' answered the lord, 'you speak like a soldier, and I greatly honour your sentiments. Indeed, I own the justice of your inference from the example you have given: for to quit a wife, as you say, in the very infancy of marriage, is, I acknowledge, some trial of resolution.' Booth answered with a low bow, and then after some immaterial conversation, his lordship promised to speak immediately to the minister, and appointed Mr. Booth to come to him on the Wednesday morning, that he might be made acquainted with his patron's success. The poor man now blushed and looked silly, till, after some time, he summoned up all his courage to his assistance, and relying on the other's friendship, he opened the

whole affair of his circumstances, and confessed that he did not dare to stir from his lodgings above one day in seven. His lordship expressed great concern at this account, and very kindly promised to take some opportunity of calling on him at his cousin Ellison's; when he hoped, he said, to bring him comfortable tidings.

Booth soon afterwards took his leave with the most profuse acknowledgments for so much goodness, and hastened home to acquaint his Amelia with what had so greatly overjoyed him. She highly congratulated him on his having found so generous and powerful a friend, towards whom both their bosoms burnt with the warmest sentiments of gratitude. She was not however contented, till she had made Booth renew his promise, in the most solemn manner, of taking her with him; after which they sat down with their little children to a frugal mutton and broth, with the highest satisfaction, and very heartily drank his lordship's health in a pot of porter.

In the afternoon this happy couple, if the reader will allow me to call poor people happy, drank tea with Mrs. Ellison, where his lordship's praises being again repeated by both the husband and wife, were very loudly echoed by Mrs. Ellison. While they were here, the young lady whom we have mentioned at the end of the last book to have made a fourth at whist, and with whom Amelia seemed so much pleased, came in; she was just returned to town from a short visit in the country, and her present visit was unexpected. It was, however, very agreeable to Amelia, who liked her still better upon a second interview, and was resolved to solicit her farther acquaintance.

Mrs. Bennet still maintained some little reserve, but was much more familiar and communicative than before. She appeared moreover to be as little ceremonious as Mrs. Ellison had reported her, and very readily accepted Amelia's apology for not paying her the first visit, and agreed to drink tea with her the very next afternoon.

Whilst the abovementioned company were sitting in Mrs. Ellison's parlour, Serjeant Atkinson passed by the widow, and knocked at the door. Mrs. Ellison no sooner saw him, than she said, 'Pray, Mr. Booth, who is

that

'that genteel young serjeant? he was here every day last week to enquire after you.' This was indeed a fact; the serjeant was apprehensive of the design of Murphy; but as the poor fellow had received all his answers from the maid or Mrs. Ellifon, Booth had never heard a word of the matter. He was however greatly pleased with what he was now told, and burst forth into great praises of the serjeant, which were seconded by Amelia, who added, that he was her foster-brother, and she believed one of the honestest fellows in the world.

'And I'll swear,' cries Mrs. Ellifon, 'he is one of the prettiest.—Do, Mr. Booth desire him to walk in. A serjeant of the guards is a gentleman; and I had rather give such a man as you describe a dish of tea, than any beau fribble of them all.'

Booth wanted no great solicitation to shew any kind of regard to Atkinson; and accordingly, the serjeant was ushered in, though not without some reluctance on his side. There is, perhaps, nothing more uneasy than those sensations which the French call the *mauvaise honte*, nor any more difficult to conquer; and poor Atkinson would, I am persuaded, have mounted a breach with less concern, than he shewed in walking across a room before three ladies, two of whom were his avowed well-wishers.

Though I do not entirely agree with the late learned Mr. Essex, the celebrated dancing master's opinion, that dancing is the rudiment of polite education, as he would, I apprehend, exclude every other art and science; yet it is certain, that persons whose feet have never been under the hands of the professors of that art, are apt to discover this want in their education in every motion, nay, even when they stand or sit still. They seem, indeed, to be overburdened with limbs, which they know not how to use; as if when nature had finished her work, the dancing-master still is necessary to put it in motion.

Atkinson was at present an example of this observation, which doth so much honour to a profession for which I have a very high regard. He was handsome, and exquisitely well made; and yet, as he had never learnt to dance, he made so awkward an appear-

ance in Mrs. Ellifon's parlour, that the good lady herself, who had invited him in, could at first scarce refrain from laughter at his behaviour.

He had not, however, been long in the room, before admiration of his person got the better of such risible ideas. So great is the advantage of beauty in men, as well as women, and so sure is this quality in either sex of procuring some regard from the beholder!

The exceeding courteous behaviour of Mrs. Ellifon, joined to that of Amelia and Booth, at length dissipated the uneasiness of Atkinson; and he gained sufficient confidence to tell the company some entertaining stories of accidents that had happened in the army within his knowledge; which, though, they greatly pleased all present, are not, however, of consequence enough to have a place in this history.

Mrs. Ellifon was so very importunate with her company to stay supper, that they all consented. As for the serjeant, he seemed to be none of the least welcome guests. She was, indeed, so pleased with what she had heard of him, and what she saw of him, that when a little warmed with wine, for she was no flincher at the bottle, she began to indulge some freedoms in her discourse towards him, that a little offended Amelia's delicacy; nay, they did not seem to be highly relished by the other lady; though I am far from insinuating that these exceeded the bounds of decorum, or were, indeed, greater liberties than ladies of the middle age, and especially widows, do frequently allow to themselves.

CHAP. III.

RELATING PRINCIPALLY TO THE AFFAIRS OF SERJEANT ATKINSON.

THE next day, when all the same company, Atkinson only excepted, assembled in Amelia's apartment, Mrs. Ellifon presently began to discourse of him, and that in terms not only of approbation, but even of affection. She called him her clever serjeant, and her dear serjeant, repeated often that he was the prettiest fellow in the army and said it was a thousand pities he had not a commission; for that,

if

if he had, she was sure he would become a general.

'I am of your opinion, Madam,' answered Booth; 'and he hath got one hundred pounds of his own already: if he could find a wife now to help him to two or three hundred more, I think he might easily get a commission in a marching regiment; for I am convinced there is no colonel in the army would refuse him.'

'Refuse him, indeed!' says Mrs. Ellison; 'no: he would be a very pretty colonel that did. And upon my honour, I believe there are very few ladies who would refuse him, if he had but a proper opportunity of soliciting them. The colonel and the lady both would be better off, than with one of those pretty masters that I see walking about, and dragging their long swords after them, when they should rather drag their leading-strings.'

'Well said,' cries Booth, 'and spoken like a woman of spirit! Indeed, I believe they would be both better served.'

'True, captain,' answered Mrs. Ellison; 'I would rather leave the two first syllables out of the word gentleman, than the last.'

'Nay, I assure you,' replied Booth, 'there is not a quieter creature in the world. Though the fellow hath the bravery of a lion, he hath the meekness of a lamb. I can tell you stories enow of that kind, and so can my dear Amelia, when he was a boy.'

'O, if the match sticks there,' cries Amelia, 'I positively will not spoil his fortune by my silence. I can answer for him from his infancy, that he was one of the best-natured lads in the world. I will tell you a story or two of him, the truth of which I can testify from my own knowledge. When he was but six years old, he was at play with me at my mother's house, and a great pointing dog bit him through the leg. The poor lad, in the midst of the anguish of his wound, declared he was overjoyed it had not happened to Miss (for the same dog had just before snapped at me, and my petticoats had been my defence.) Another instance of his goodness, which greatly recommended him to my father, and which I have loved him for ever since, was

this: my father was a great lover of birds, and strictly forbade the spoiling of their nests. Poor Joe was one day caught upon a tree, and being concluded guilty was severely lashed for it; but it was afterwards discovered that another boy, a friend of Joe's, had robbed the nest of it's young one's, and poor Joe had climbed the tree in order to restore them; notwithstanding which, he submitted to the punishment, rather than he would impeach his companion. But if these stories appear childish and trifling, the duty and kindness he hath shewn to his mother must commend him to every one. Ever since he hath been fifteen years old, he hath more than half supported her; and when my brother died, I remember particularly, Joe (at his desire, for he was much his favourite,) had one of his suits given him; but instead of his becoming finer on that occasion, another young fellow came to church in my brother's cloaths, and my old nurse appeared the same Sunday in a new gown, which her son had purchased for her with the sale of his legacy.'

'Well, I protest, he is a very worthy creature!' said Mrs. Bennet.

'He is a charming fellow,' cries Mrs. Ellison. 'But then the name of serjeant, Captain Booth, there, as the play says, my pride brings me off again.'

'And whatsoever the sages charge on pride, The angels fall, and twenty other good faults beside;

'On earth I'm sure---I'm sure---something ---calling

'Pride saves man, and our sex too, from falling.'

Here a footman's rap at the door shook the room; upon which Mrs. Ellison, running to the window, cried out, 'Let me die, if it is not my lord! what shall I do? I must be at home to him; but suppose he should enquire for you, captain, what shall I say? or will you go down with me?'

The company were in some confusion at this instant, and before they had agreed on any thing, Booth's little girl came running into the room, and said, there was a prodigious great gentleman coming up stairs. She was immediately

ately followed by his lordship; who, as he knew Booth must be at home, made very little or no enquiry at the door.

Amelia was taken somewhat at a surprise, but she was too polite to shew much confusion: for though she knew nothing of the town, she had had a genteel education, and kept the best company the country afforded. The ceremonies therefore passed as usual, and they all sat down.

His lordship soon addressed himself to Booth, saying, 'As I have what I think good news for you, Sir, I could not delay giving myself the pleasure of communicating it to you. I have mentioned your affair where I promised you; and I have no doubt of my success. One may easily perceive, you know, from the manner of people's behaving upon such occasions; and indeed, when I related your case, I found there was much inclination to serve you. Great men, Mr. Booth, must do things in their own time; but I think you may depend on having something done very soon.'

Booth made many acknowledgments for his lordship's goodness, and now a second time paid all the thanks which would have been due even had the favour been obtained. This art of promising is the oeconomy of a great man's pride; a sort of good husbandry in conferring favours, by which they receive tenfold in acknowledgments for every obligation; I mean, among those who really intend the service; for there are others who cheat poor men of their thanks, without ever designing to deserve them at all.

This matter being sufficiently discussed, the conversation took a gayer turn; and my lord began to entertain the ladies with some of that elegant discourse which, though most delightful to hear, it is impossible should ever be read.

His lordship was so highly pleased with Amelia, that he could not help being somewhat particular to her; but this particularity distinguished itself only in a higher degree of respect, and was so very polite, and so very distant, that she herself was pleased; and at his departure, which was not till he had far exceeded the length of a common visit, declared he was the finest gentle-

man she had ever seen; with which sentiment her husband and Mrs. Ellison both entirely concurred.

Mrs. Bennet, on the contrary, expressed some little dislike to my lord's complaisance, which she called excessive. 'For my own part,' said she, 'I have not the least relish for those very fine gentlemen. What the world generally calls politeness, I term insincerity; and I am more charmed with the stories which Mrs. Booth told us of the honest serjeant, than with all that the finest gentlemen in the world ever said in their lives. O to be sure,' cries Mrs. Ellison, *All for love, or the world well lost*, is a motto very proper for some folks to wear in their coat of arms; but the generality of the world will, I believe, agree with that lady's opinion of my cousin, rather than with Mrs. Bennet.'

Mrs. Bennet seeing Mrs. Ellison took offence at what she said, thought proper to make some apology, which was very readily accepted, and so ended the visit.

We cannot, however, put an end to the chapter, without observing that such is the ambitious temper of beauty, that it may always apply to itself that celebrated passage in *Lucan*,

*Nec quenquam jam ferre potest Cæsaris priorem,
Pompiusve parem.*

Indeed, I believe it may be laid down as a general rule, that no woman who hath any great pretensions to admiration, is ever well pleased in a company where she perceives herself to fill only the second place. This observation, however, I humbly submit to the judgment of the ladies, and hope it will be considered as retracted by me, if they shall dissent from my opinion.

C. H. A. P. IV.

CONTAINING MATTERS THAT REQUIRE NO PREFACE.

WHEN Booth and his wife were left alone together, they both extremely exulted in their good fortune, in having found so good a friend as his lordship; nor were they wanting in very warm expressions of their gratitude.

titude towards Mrs. Ellison; after which they began to lay down schemes of living when Booth should have his commission of captain; and after the exactest computation concluded, that with economy they should be able to save, at least, fifty pounds a year out of their income, in order to pay their debts.

These matters being well settled, Amelia asked Booth what he thought of Mrs. Bennet. 'I think, my dear,' answered Booth, 'that she hath been formerly a very pretty woman.'—'I am mistaken,' replied she, 'if she be not a very good creature. I don't know I ever took such a liking to any one on so short an acquaintance. I fancy she hath been a very sprightly woman: for if you observe, she discovers by starts a great vivacity in her countenance.'—'I made the same observation,' cries Booth: 'sure some strange misfortune hath befallen her.'—'A misfortune indeed!' answered Amelia. 'Sure, child, you forgot what Mrs. Ellison told us, that she had lost a beloved husband; a misfortune which I have often wondered at any woman's surviving.' At which words she cast a tender look at Booth; and presently afterwards throwing herself upon his neck, cried, 'O heavens! what a happy creature am I! When I consider the dangers you have gone through, how I exult in my bliss!' The good-natured reader will suppose that Booth was not deficient in returning such tenderness; after which the conversation became too fond to be here related.

The next morning Mrs. Ellison addressed herself to Booth as follows. 'I shall make no apology, Sir, for what I am going to say, as it proceeds from my friendship to yourself, and your dear lady. I am convinced then, Sir, there is something more than accident in your going abroad only one day in the week. Now, Sir, if, as I am afraid, matters are not altogether as well as I wish them, I beg, since I do not believe you are provided with a lawyer, that you will suffer me to recommend one to you. The person I shall mention, is, I assure you, of much ability in his profession, and I have known him do great services to gentlemen un-

der a cloud. Do not be ashamed of your circumstances, my dear friend: they are a much greater scandal to those who have left so much merit unprovided for.'

Booth gave Mrs. Ellison abundance of thanks for her kindness, and explicitly confessed to her that her conjectures were right, and without hesitation accepted the offer of her friend's assistance.

Mrs. Ellison then acquainted him with her apprehensions on this account. She said, she had both yesterday and this morning seen two or three very ugly suspicious fellows pass several times by her window. 'Upon all accounts,' said she, 'my dear Sir, I advise you to keep yourself close confined till the lawyer hath been with you. I am sure he will get you your liberty, at least of walking about within the verge. There's something to be done with the board of green cloth, I don't know what; but this I know, that several gentlemen have lived here a long time very comfortably, and have defied all the vengeance of their creditors. However, in the mean time, you must be a close prisoner with your lady; and I believe there is no man in England but would exchange his liberty for the same gaol.'

She then departed in order to send for the attorney, and presently afterwards the serjeant arrived with news of the like kind. He said, he had scraped an acquaintance with Murphy. 'I hope your honour will pardon me,' cries Atkinson, 'but I pretended to have a small demand upon your honour myself, and offered to employ him in the business; upon which he told me, that if I would go with him to the marshal's court, and make affidavit of my debt, he should be able very shortly to get it me; "for I shall have the captain in hold," cries he, "within a day or two."—I wish,' said the serjeant, 'I could do your honour any service. Shall I walk about all day before the door? or shall I be porter, and watch it in the inside, till your honour can find some means of securing yourself? I hope you will not be offended at me, but I beg you would take care of falling into Murphy's hands; for he hath the character of the greatest villain upon earth. I

'am afraid you will think me too bold, Sir, but I have a little money; if it can be of any service, do, pray your honour command it. It can never do me so much good any other way. Consider, Sir, I owe all I have to yourself and my dear mistress.'

Booth stood a moment as if he had been thunderstruck; and then, the tears bursting from his eyes, he said: 'Upon my soul, Atkinson, you overcome me. I scarce ever heard of so much goodness, nor do I know how to express my sentiments of it. But be assured, as for your money, I will not accept it; and let it satisfy you, that in my present circumstances it would do me no essential service; but this be assured of likewise, that whilst I live, I shall never forget the kindness of the offer. However, as I apprehend I may be in some danger of fellows getting into the house, for a day or two, as I have no guard but a poor little girl, I will not refuse the goodness you offer to shew in my protection. And I make no doubt but Mrs. Ellison will let you sit in her parlour for that purpose.'

Atkinson with the utmost readiness undertook the office of porter; and Mrs. Ellison as readily allotted him a place in her back parlour, where he continued three days together, from eight in the morning till twelve at night; during which time, he had sometimes the company of Mrs. Ellison, and sometimes of Booth, Amelia, and Mrs. Bennet too; for this last had taken as great a fancy to Amelia, as Amelia had to her; and therefore, as Mr. Booth's affairs were now no secret in the neighbourhood, made her frequent visits during the confinement of her husband, and consequently of her own.

Nothing, as I remember, happened in this interval of time, more worthy notice than the following card, which Amelia received from her old acquaintance Mrs. James. 'Mrs. James sends her compliments to Mrs. Booth, and desires to know how she does; for as she hath not had the favour of seeing her at her own house, or of meeting her in any publick place, in so long a time, fears it may be owing to ill health.'

Amelia had long given over all thoughts of her friend, and doubted not but that she was as entirely given

over by her; she was very much surprized at this message, and under some doubt whether it was not meant as an insult, especially from the mention of publick places, which she thought so inconsistent with her present circumstances, of which she supposed Mrs. James was well apprized. However, at the entreaty of her husband, who languished for nothing more than to be again reconciled to his friend James, Amelia undertook to pay the lady a visit, and to examine into the mystery of this conduct, which appeared to her so unaccountable.

Mrs. James received her with a degree of civility that amazed Amelia, no less than her coldness had done before. She resolved to come to an eclaircissement, and having sat out some company that came in, when they were alone together, Amelia, after some silence, and many offers to speak, at last said, 'My dear Jenny, (if you will now suffer me to call you by so familiar a name) have you entirely forgot a certain young lady who had the pleasure of being your intimate acquaintance at Montpelier?'—'Whom do you mean, dear Madam?' cries Mrs. James with great concern. 'I mean, myself,' answered Amelia. 'You surprize me, Madam,' replied Mrs. James. 'How can you ask me that question?'—'Nay, my dear, I do not intend to offend you,' cries Amelia; 'but I am really desirous to solve to myself the reason of that coldness which you shewed me, when you did me the favour of a visit. Can you think, my dear, I was not disappointed, when I expected to meet an intimate friend, to receive a cold formal visitant? I desire you to examine your own heart, and answer me honestly, if you do not think I had some little reason to be dissatisfied with your behaviour?'—'Indeed, Mrs. Booth,' answered the other lady, 'you surprize me very much; if there was any thing displeasing to you in my behaviour, I am extremely concerned at it. I did not know I had been defective in any of the rules of civility; but if I was, Madam, I ask your pardon.'—'Is civility then, my dear,' replied Amelia, 'a synonymous term with friendship? Could I have expected, when I parted the last time with Miss Jenny Bath, to have met her

her the next time in the shape of a fine lady, complaining of the hardship of climbing up two pair of stairs to visit me, and then approaching me with the distant air of a new or a slight acquaintance? Do you think, my dear Mrs. James, if the tables had been turned, if my fortune had been as high in the world as yours, and you in my distress and abject condition, that I would not have climbed as high as the Monument to visit you?—'Sure, Madam,' cried Mrs. James, 'I mistake you, or you have greatly mistaken me. Can you complain of my not visiting you, who have owed me a visit almost these three weeks? Nay, did I not even then send you a card, which sure was doing more than all the friendship and good-breeding in the world required? But indeed, as I had met you in no public place, I really thought you was ill.'—'How can you mention public places to me,' said Amelia, 'when you can hardly be a stranger to my present situation? Did you not know, Madam, that I was ruined?'—'No, indeed, Madam, did not I,' replied Mrs. James; 'I am sure I should have been highly concerned if I had.'—'Why, sure, my dear,' cries Amelia, 'you could not imagine that we were in affluent circumstances, when you found us in such a place, and in such a condition.'—'Nay, my dear,' answered Mrs. James, 'since you are pleased to mention it first yourself, I own, I was a little surprized to see you in no better lodgings; but I concluded you had your own reasons for liking them; and, for my own part, I have laid it down as a positive rule, never to enquire into the private affairs of any one, especially of my friends. I am not of the humour of some ladies, who confine the circle of their acquaintance to one part of the town, and would not be known to visit in the city for the world. For my part, I never dropt an acquaintance with any one, while it was reputable to keep it up; and I can solemnly declare I have not a friend in the world for whom I have a greater esteem than I have for Mrs. Booth.'

At this instant, the arrival of a new visitant put an end to the discourse, and Amelia soon after took her leave without the least anger, but with some little

unavoidable contempt for a lady, in whose opinion, as we have hinted before, outward form and ceremony constituted the whole essence of friendship; who valued all her acquaintance alike, as each individual served equally to fill up a place in her visiting roll; and who, in reality, had not the least concern for the good qualities or well-being of any of them.

C H A P. V.

CONTAINING MUCH HEROICK MATTER.

AT the end of three days, Mrs. Ellison's friend had so far purchased Mr. Booth's liberty, that he could walk again abroad within the verge, without any danger of having a warrant backed against him by the board before he had notice. As for the ill-looking persons that had given the alarm, it was now discovered that another unhappy gentleman, and not Booth, was the object of their pursuit.

Mr. Booth being now delivered from his fears, went, as he had formerly done, to take his morning walk in the Park. Here he met Colonel Bath in company with some other officers, and very civilly paid his respects to him. But instead of returning the salute, the colonel looked him full in the face with a very stern countenance; and, if he could be said to take any notice of him, it was in such a manner as to inform him he would take no notice of him.

Booth was not more hurt than surprized at this behaviour, and resolved to know the reason of it. He therefore watched an opportunity till the colonel was alone, and then walked boldly up to him, and desired to know if he had given him any offence. The colonel answered hastily, 'Sir, I am above being offended with you, nor do I think it consistent with my dignity to make you any answer.' Booth replied, 'I don't know, Sir, that I have done any thing to deserve this treatment.'—'Look'e, Sir,' cries the colonel, 'if I had not formerly had some respect for you, I should not think you worth my resentment. However, as you are a gentleman born, and an officer, and as I have had an esteem for you,

'I will give you some marks of it, by putting it in your power to do yourself justice. I will tell you, therefore, Sir, that you have acted like a scoundrel.'—'If we were not in the Park,' answered Booth warmly, 'I would thank you very properly for that compliment.'—'O Sir!' cries the colonel, 'we can be soon in a convenient place.' Upon which Booth answered, he would attend him wherever he pleased. The colonel then bid him come along, and strutted forward directly up Constitution Hill to Hyde Park, Booth following him at first, and afterwards walking before him, till they came to that place which may properly be called the Field of Blood, being that part a little to the left of the ring which heroes have chosen for the scene of their exit out of this world.

Booth reached the ring some time before the colonel; for he mended not his pace, any more than a Spaniard. To say truth, I believe it was not in his power; for he had so long accustomed himself to one and the same strut, that as a horse used always to trotting can scarce be forced into a gallop, so could no passion force the colonel to alter his pace.

At length, however, both parties arrived at the lists, where the colonel very deliberately took off his wig and coat, and laid them on the grass; and then drawing his sword, advanced to Booth, who had likewise his drawn weapon in his hand, but had made no other preparation for the combat.

The combatants now engaged with great fury, and after two or three passes, Booth ran the colonel through the body, and threw him on the ground, at the same time possessing himself of the colonel's sword.

As soon as the colonel was become master of his speech, he called out to Booth in a very kind voice, and said, 'You have done my business, and satisfied me that you are a man of honour, and that my brother James must have been mistaken: for I am convinced, that no man who will draw his sword in so gallant a manner, is capable of being a rascal. D—n me, give me a buff, my dear boy; I ask your pardon for that infamous appellation I dishonoured your dignity with; but, d—n me,

if it was not purely out of love, and to give you an opportunity of doing yourself justice, which I own you have done like a man of honour. What may be the consequence I know not; but I hope, at least, I shall live to reconcile you with my brother.'

Booth shewed great concern, and even horror in his countenance. 'Why, my dear colonel,' said he, 'would you force me to this? For Heaven's sake, tell me, what I have ever done to offend you?'

'Me!' cried the colonel. 'Indeed, my dear child, you never did any thing to offend me. Nay, I have acted the part of a friend to you in the whole affair. I maintained your cause with my brother as long as decency would permit. I could not flatly contradict him, though, indeed, I scarce believed him. But what could I do? If I had not fought with you, I must have been obliged to have fought with him; however, I hope what is done will be sufficient, and that matters may be *discommodated* without your being put to the necessity of fighting any more on this occasion.'

'Never regard me,' cried Booth eagerly; 'for Heaven's sake, think of your own preservation. Let me put you into a chair, and get you a surgeon.'

'Thou art a noble lad,' cries the colonel, who was now got on his legs, and I am glad the business is so well over. For though your sword went quite through, it slanted so, that I apprehend there is little danger of life. However, I think there is enough done to put an honourable end to the affair, especially as you was so hasty to disarm me. I bleed a little, but I can walk to the house by the water; and if you will send me a chair thither, I shall be obliged to you.'

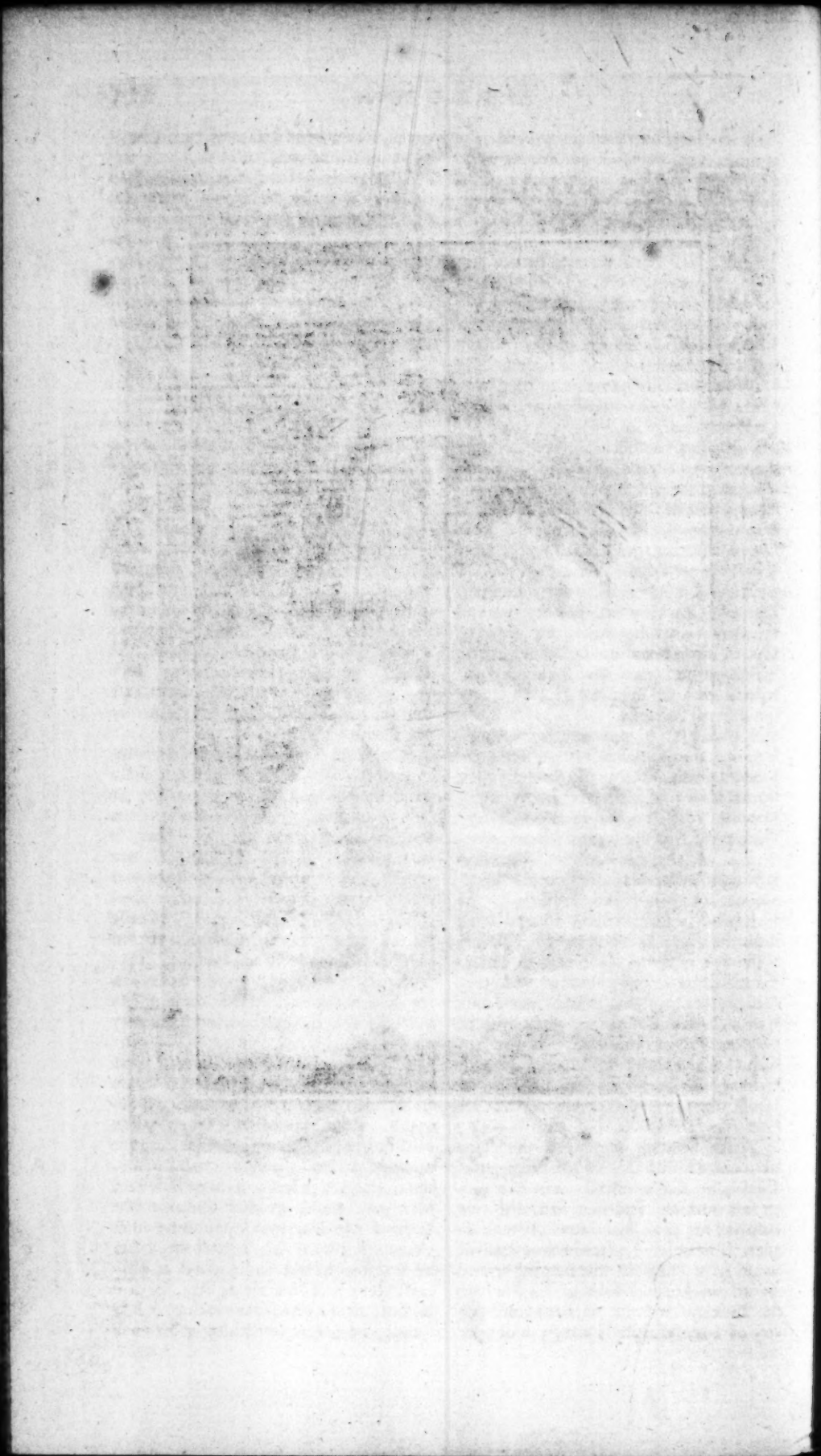
As the colonel refused any assistance, (indeed he was very able to walk without it, though with somewhat less dignity than usual) Booth set forward to Grosvenor Gate, in order to procure the chair, and soon after returned with one to his friend; whom having conveyed into it, he attended himself on foot into Bond Street, where then lived a very eminent surgeon.

The



Plate IV.

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The surgeon having proved the wound, turned towards Booth, who was apparently the guilty person, and said with a smile, 'Upon my word, Sir, you have performed the business with great dexterity.'

'Sir,' cries the colonel to the surgeon, 'I would not have you imagine I am afraid to die. I think I know more what belongs to the dignity of a man; and, I believe, I have shewn it at the head of a line of battle. Do not impute my concern to that fear, when I ask you whether there is or is not any danger!'

'Really, colonel,' answered the surgeon, who well knew the complexion of the gentleman then under his hands, 'it would appear like presumption to say, that a man who hath been just run through the body, is in no manner of danger. But this, I think, I may assure you, that I yet perceive no very bad symptoms, and unless something worse should appear, or a fever be the consequence, I hope you may live to be again, with all your dignity, at the head of a line of battle.'

'I am glad to hear that is your opinion,' quoth the colonel, 'for I am not desirous of dying, though I am not afraid of it. But if any thing worse than you apprehend should happen, I desire you will be a witness of my declaration, that this young gentleman is entirely innocent. I forced him to do what he did.—My dear Booth, I am pleased matters are as they are. You are the first man that ever gained an advantage over me; but it was very lucky for you that you disarmed me, and I doubt not but you have the equanimity to think so. If the business, therefore, hath ended without doing any thing to the purpose, it was fortune's pleasure, and neither of our faults.'

Booth heartily embraced the colonel, and assured him of the great satisfaction he had received from the surgeon's opinion: and soon after the two combatants took their leave of each other. The colonel, after he was dressed, went in a chair to his lodgings, and Booth walked on foot to his; where he luckily arrived without meeting any of Mr. Murphy's gang; a danger

which never once occurred to his imagination till he was out of it.

The affair he had been about, had indeed, so entirely occupied his mind, that it had obliterated every other idea; among the rest, it caused him so absolutely to forget the time of the day, that though he had exceeded the time of dining above two hours, he had not the least suspicion of being at home later than usual.

CHAP. VI.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL FIND MATTER WORTHY HIS CONSIDERATION.

AMELIA having waited above an hour for her husband, concluded, as he was the most punctual man alive, that he had met with some engagement abroad, and sat down to her meal with her children; which, as it was always uncomfortable in the absence of her husband, was very short; so that before his return, all the apparatus of dining was entirely removed.

Booth sat some time with his wife, expecting every minute when the little maid would make her appearance; at last, curiosity, I believe, rather than appetite, made him ask, how long it was to dinner. 'To dinner, my dear!' answered Amelia; 'sure you have dined, I hope?' Booth replied in the negative; upon which, his wife started from her chair, and bestirred herself as nimbly to provide him a repast, as the most industrious hostess in the kingdom doth, when some unexpected guest of extraordinary quality arrives at her house.

The reader hath not, I think, from any passages hitherto recorded in this history, had much reason to accuse Amelia of a blameable curiosity; he will not, I hope, conclude that she gave an instance of any such fault, when, upon Booth's having so long overstaid his time, and so greatly mistaken the hour of the day, and upon some other circumstances of his behaviour, (for he was too honest to be good at concealing any of his thoughts) she said to him, after he had done eating, 'My dear, I am sure something more than
'ordi-

'ordinary hath happened to-day, and I beg you will tell me what it is.'

Booth answered, that nothing of any consequence had happened; that he had been detained by a friend, whom he met accidentally, longer than he expected. In short, he made many shuffling and evasive answers; not boldly lying out, which, perhaps, would have succeeded, but poorly and vainly endeavouring to reconcile falsehood with truth; an attempt which seldom fails to betray the most practised deceiver.

How impossible was it, therefore, for Booth to succeed in an art for which nature had so entirely disqualified him! His countenance indeed confessed faster than his tongue denied; and the whole of his behaviour gave Amelia an alarm, and made her suspect something very bad had happened; and as her thoughts turned presently on the badness of their circumstances, she feared some mischief from his creditors had befallen him; for she was too ignorant of such matters to know, that if he had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, (which is the name given by the faithful to bailiffs) he would hardly have been able so soon to recover his liberty. Booth at last perceived her to be uneasy; and as he saw no hopes of contriving any fiction to satisfy her, he thought himself obliged to tell her the truth, or at least part of the truth; and confessed that he had had a little skirmish with Colonel Bath, in which, he said, the colonel had received a slight wound, not at all dangerous: 'And this,' says he, 'is all the whole matter.'—'If it be so,' cries Amelia, 'I thank Heaven no worse hath happened; but why, my dear, will you ever converse with that madman, who can embrace a friend one moment, and fight with him the next?'—'Nay, my dear,' answered Booth, 'you yourself must confess, though he be a little too much on the *qui vive*, he is a man of great honour and good-nature.'—'Tell me not,' replied she, 'of such good-nature and honour as would sacrifice a friend, and a whole family, to a ridiculous whim.—O, Heaven!' cried she, falling upon her knees, 'from what misery have I escaped! from what have these poor babes escaped, through your

'gracious providence this day!'—Then turning to her husband, she cried, 'But are you sure the monster's wound is no more dangerous than you say? A monster surely I may call him, who can quarrel with a man that could not, that I am convinced would not offend him!'

Upon this question, Booth repeated the assurances which the surgeon had given them, perhaps with a little enlargement, which pretty well satisfied Amelia; and instead of blaming her husband for what he had done, she tenderly embraced him, and again returned thanks to Heaven for his safety.

In the evening, Booth insisted on paying a short visit to the colonel, highly against the inclination of Amelia, who by many arguments and entreaties endeavoured to dissuade her husband from continuing an acquaintance, in which, she said, she should always foresee much danger for the future. However, she was at last prevailed upon to acquiesce; and Booth went to the colonel, whose lodgings happened to be in the verge, as well as his own.

He found the colonel in his night-gown, and his great chair, engaged with another officer at a game of chess. He rose immediately, and having heartily embraced Booth, presented him to his friend, saying, he had the honour to introduce to him as brave and as *fortitudinous* a man as any in the king's dominions. He then took Booth with him into the next room, and desired him not to mention a word of what had happened in the morning: saying, 'I am very well satisfied that no more hath happened; however, as it ended in nothing, I could wish it might remain a secret.' Booth told him he was heartily glad to find him so well, and promised never to mention it more to any one.

The game at chess being but just begun, and neither of the parties having gained any considerable advantage, they neither of them insisted on continuing it; and now the colonel's antagonist took his leave, and left the colonel and Booth together.

As soon as they were alone, the latter earnestly entreated the former to acquaint him with the real cause of his anger; 'for may I perish,' cries Booth, 'if I can even guess what I have ever
done

done to offend either you or your brother Colonel James!

'Look'e, child,' cries the colonel, 'I tell you I am for my own part satisfied; for I am convinced that a man who will fight, can never be a rascal; and therefore, why should you enquire any more of me at present? when I see my brother James, I hope to reconcile all matters, and perhaps, no more swords need be drawn on this occasion.' But Booth still persisting in his desire, the colonel, after some hesitation, with a tremendous oath, cried out, 'I do not think myself at liberty to refuse you, after the indignity I offered you; so, since you demand it of me, I will inform you. My brother told me you had used him dishonourably, and had *disvellicated* his character behind his back. He gave me his word too, that he was well assured of what he said. What could I have done, though I own to you I did not believe him, and your behaviour since hath convinced me I was in the right? I must either have given him the lye, and fought with him, or else I was obliged to behave as I did, and fight with you. And now, my lad, I leave it to you to do as you please; but if you are laid under any necessity to do yourself farther justice, it is your own fault.'

'Alas, colonel!' answered Booth, 'besides the obligations I have to the colonel, I have really so much love for him, that I think of nothing less than resentment. All I wish, is to have this affair brought to an éclaircissement, and to satisfy him that he is in an error: for though his assertions are cruelly injurious, and I have never deserved them; yet I am convinced he would not say what he did not himself think. Some rascal, envious of his friendship for me, hath belyed me to him; and the only resentment I desire, is to convince him of his mistake.'

At these words, the colonel grinned horribly a ghastly smile, or rather sneer, and answered, 'Young gentleman, you may do as you please; but by the eternal dignity of man, if any man breathing had taken a liberty with my character—here, here—Mr. Booth, (showing his fingers) here, d—n me, should be his nostrils;

he should breathe through my hands, and breathe his last, d—n me!'

Booth answered, 'I think, colonel, I may appeal to your testimony that I dare do myself justice; since he who dare draw his sword against you, can hardly be supposed to fear any other person; but I repeat to you again, that I love Colonel James so well, and am so greatly obliged to him, that it would be almost indifferent to me, whether I directed my sword against his breast, or my own.'

The colonel's muscles were considerably softened by Booth's last speech; but he again contracted them into a vast degree of fierceness, before he cried out, 'Boy, thou hast reason enough to be vain; for thou art the first person that ever could proudly say, he gained an advantage over me in combat. I believe, indeed, thou art not afraid of any man breathing; and, as I know thou hast some obligations to my brother, I do not discommend thee; for nothing more becomes the dignity of a man than gratitude. Besides, as I am satisfied my brother can produce the author of the slander—I say, I am satisfied of that; d—n me, if any man alive dares assert the contrary, for that would be to make my brother himself a liar—I will make him produce his author; and then, my dear boy, your doing yourself proper justice there, will bring you finely out of the whole affair. As soon as my surgeon gives me leave to go abroad, which, I hope, will be in a few days, I will bring my brother James to a tavern, where you shall meet us; and I will engage my honour, my whole dignity to you, to make you friends.'

This assurance of the colonel gave Booth great pleasure; for few persons ever loved a friend better than he did James: and as for doing military justice on the author of that scandalous report which had incensed his friend against him, not Bath himself was ever more ready on such an occasion, than Booth, to execute it. He soon after took his leave, and returned home in high spirits to his Amelia, whom he found in Mrs. Ellison's apartment, engaged in a party at ombre with that lady and her right honourable cousin.

His lordship had, it seems, had a second

cond interview with the great man, and having obtained farther hopes (for I think there was not yet an absolute promise) of success in Mr. Booth's affairs, his usual good-nature brought him immediately to acquaint Mr. Booth with it. As he did not therefore find him at home, and as he met with the two ladies together, he resolved to stay till his friend's return, which he was assured would not be long, especially as he was so lucky, he said, to have no particular engagement that whole evening.

We remarked before, that his lordship, at the first interview with Amelia, had distinguished her by a more particular address from the other ladies; but that now appeared to be rather owing to his perfect good-breeding, as she was then to be considered as the mistress of the house, than from any other preference. His present behaviour made this still more manifest; for as he was now in Mrs. Ellison's apartment, though she was his relation and an old acquaintance, he applied his conversation rather more to her than to Amelia. His eyes, indeed, were now and then guilty of the contrary distinction, but this was only by stealth; for they constantly withdrew the moment they were discovered. In short, he treated Amelia with the greatest distance, and at the same time with the most profound and awful respect; his conversation was so general, so lively, and so obliging, that Amelia, when she added to his agreeableness the obligations she had to him for his friendship to Booth, was certainly as much pleased with his lordship, as any virtuous woman can possibly be with any man besides her own husband.

CHAP. VII.

CONTAINING VARIOUS MATTERS.

WE have already mentioned the good-humour in which Booth returned home; and the reader will easily believe it was not a little increased by the good-humour in which he found his company. My lord received him with the utmost marks of friendship and affection, and told him that his affairs went on as well almost as he himself could desire, and that he

doubted not very soon to wish him joy of a company.

When Booth had made a proper return to all his lordship's unparalleled goodness, he whispered Amelia that the colonel was entirely out of danger, and almost as well as himself. This made her satisfaction complete, threw her into such spirits, and gave such a lustre to her eyes, that her face, as Horace says, was too dazzling to be looked at; it was certainly too handsome to be looked at without the highest admiration.

His lordship departed about ten o'clock, and left the company in raptures with him; especially the two ladies, of whom it is difficult to say which exceeded the other in his commendations. Mrs. Ellison swore she believed he was the best of all human kind; and Amelia, without making any exception, declared he was the finest gentleman, and most agreeable man, she had ever seen in her life; adding, it was a great pity he should remain single. 'That's true, indeed,' cries Mrs. Ellison; 'and I have often lamented it, nay I am astonished at it, considering the great liking he always shews for our sex, and he may certainly have the choice of all. The real reason, I believe, is his fondness for his sister's children. I declare, Madam, if you was to see his behaviour to them, you would think they were his own. Indeed he is vastly fond of all manner of children!'—'Good creature,' cries Amelia; 'if ever he doth me the honour of another visit, I am resolved I will shew him my little things. I think, Mrs. Ellison, as you say my lord loves children, I may say, without vanity, he will not see many such.'—'No, indeed, will he not,' answered Mrs. Ellison; 'and now I think on't, Madam, I wonder at my own stupidity, in never making the offer before: but since you put it into my head, if you will give me leave, I'll take master and miss to wait on my lord's nephew and niece. They are very pretty-behaved children; and little master and miss will be, I dare swear, very happy in their acquaintance: besides, if my lord himself should see them, I know what will happen, for he is the most generous of all human beings.'

Amelia

Amelia very readily accepted the favour which Mrs. Ellison offered her; but Booth expressed some reluctance. 'Upon my word, my dear,' said he, with a smile, 'this behaviour of ours puts me in mind of the common conduct of beggars; who, whenever they receive a favour, are sure to send other objects to the same fountain of charity. Don't we, my dear, repay our obligations to my lord in the same manner, by sending our children a begging to him?'

'O beastly!' cries Mrs. Ellison; 'how could such a thought enter your brains!—I protest, Madam, I begin to grow ashamed of this husband of yours.—How can you have so vulgar a way of thinking? Begging, indeed! The poor little dear things a begging! If my lord was capable of such a thought, though he was my own brother instead of my cousin, I should scorn him too much ever to enter his doors.'—'O dear Madam,' answered Amelia, 'you take Mr. Booth too seriously, when he was only in jest; and the children shall wait upon you whenever you please.'

Though Booth had been a little more in earnest than Amelia had represented him, and was not, perhaps, quite so much in the wrong as he was considered by Mrs. Ellison; yet, seeing there were two to one against him, he wisely thought proper to recede, and let his smile go off with that air of a jest which his wife had given it.

Mrs. Ellison, however, could not let it pass without paying some compliments to Amelia's understanding, nor without some obscure reflections upon Booth, with whom she was more offended than the matter required. She was indeed a woman of most profuse generosity, and could not bear a thought which she deemed vulgar or sneaking. She afterwards launched forth the most profuse encomiums on his lordship's liberality, and concluded the evening with some instances which he had given of that virtue, which, if not the noblest, is, perhaps, one of the most useful to society, with which great and rich men can be endowed.

The next morning early, Serjeant Atkinson came to wait on Lieutenant Booth, and desired to speak with his honour in private; upon which the lieutenant and serjeant took a walk to-

gether in the Park. Booth expected every minute when the serjeant would open his mouth, under which expectation he continued till he came to the end of the Mall, and so he might have continued till he came to the end of the world; for though several words stood at the end of the serjeant's lips, there they were likely to remain for ever. He was indeed in the condition of a miser, whom a charitable impulse hath impelled to draw a few pence to the edge of his pocket, where they are altogether as secure as if they were in the bottom: for, as the one hath not the heart to part with a farthing, so neither had the other the heart to speak a word.

Booth at length, wondering that the serjeant did not speak, asked him, what his business was; when the latter, with a stammering voice, began the following apology: 'I hope, Sir, your honour will not be angry, nor take any thing amiss of me. I do assure you, it was not of my seeking; nay, I dare not proceed in the matter without first asking you leave. Indeed, if I had taken any liberties from the goodness you have been pleased to shew me, I should look upon myself as one of the most worthless and despicable of wretches; but nothing is farther from my thoughts. I know the distance which is between us; and because your honour has been so kind and good as to treat me with more familiarity than any other officer ever did, if I had been base enough to take any freedoms, or to encroach upon your honour's goodness, I should deserve to be whipt through the regiment. I hope therefore, Sir, you will not suspect me of any such attempt.'

'What can all this mean, Atkinson?' cries Booth; 'what mighty matter would you introduce with all this previous apology?'

'I am almost ashamed and afraid to mention it,' answered the serjeant, 'and yet I am sure your honour will believe what I have said, and not think any thing owing to my own presumption; and at the same time, I have no reason to think you would do any thing to spoil my fortune in an honest way, when it is dropt into my lap without my own seeking. For may I perish, if it is not all the lady's own goodness! and I hope in

Heaven,

'Heaven, with your honour's leave, I shall live to make her amends for it.'

In a word, that we may not detain the reader's curiosity quite so long as he did Booth's, he acquainted that gentleman that he had had an offer of marriage from a lady of his acquaintance, to whose company he had introduced him, and desired his permission to accept of it.

Booth must have been very dull indeed, if after what the serjeant had said, and after what he had heard Mrs. Ellison say, he had wanted any other information concerning the lady. He answered him briskly and cheerfully, that he had his free consent to marry any woman whatever: 'And the greater and richer she is,' added he, 'the more I shall be pleased with the match. I don't enquire who the lady is,' said he, smiling, 'but I hope she will make as good a wife, as I am convinced her husband will deserve.'

'Your honour hath been always too good to me,' cries Atkinson; 'but this I promise you, I will do all in my power to merit the kindness she is pleased to shew me. I will be bold to say she will marry an honest man, though he is but a poor one; and she shall never want any thing which I can give her, or do for her, while my name is Joseph Atkinson.'

'And so her name is a secret, Joe; is it?' cries Booth.

'Why, Sir,' answered the serjeant, 'I hope your honour will not insist upon knowing that, as I think it would be dishonourable in me to mention it.'

'Not at all,' replied Booth; 'I am the farthest in the world from any such desire. I know thee better than to imagine thou wouldst disclose the name of a fair lady.' Booth then took Atkinson heartily by the hand, and assured him earnestly of the joy he had in his good fortune; for which the good serjeant failed not of making all proper acknowledgments; after which they parted, and Booth returned home.

As Mrs. Ellison opened the door, Booth hastily rushed by; for he had the utmost difficulty to prevent laughing in her face. He ran directly up stairs, and throwing himself into a chair, discharged such a fit of laughter

as greatly surprized, and at first almost frightened, his wife.

Amelia, it will be supposed, presently enquired into the cause of this phenomenon; with which Booth, as soon as he was able, (for that was not within a few minutes) acquainted her. The news did not affect her in the same manner it had affected her husband; on the contrary, she cried, 'I protest I cannot guess what makes you see it in so ridiculous a light. I really think Mrs. Ellison hath chosen very well. I am convinced Joe will make her one of the best of husbands; and, in my opinion, that is the greatest blessing a woman can be possessed of!'

However, when Mrs. Ellison came into the room a little while afterwards to fetch the children, Amelia became of a more risible disposition; especially when the former, turning to Booth, who was then present said, 'So, captain, my jantee serjeant was very early here this morning. I scolded my maid heartily for letting him wait so long in the entry, like a lacquey, when she might have shewn him into my inner apartment.' At which words, Booth burst out into a very loud laugh; and Amelia herself could no more prevent laughing than she could blushing.

'Heyday!' cries Mrs. Ellison; 'what have I said, to cause all this mirth!' and at the same time blushed, and looked very silly, as is always the case with persons who suspect themselves to be the objects of laughter, without absolutely taking what it is which makes them ridiculous.

Booth still continued laughing; but Amelia, composing her muscles, said, 'I ask your pardon, dear Mrs. Ellison, but Mr. Booth hath been in a strange giggling humour all this morning; and I really think it is infectious.'

'I ask your pardon too, Madam,' cries Booth, 'but one is sometimes unaccountably foolish.'

'Nay, but seriously,' said she, 'what is the matter? Something I said about the serjeant, I believe; but you may laugh as much as you please; I am not ashamed of owning, I think him one of the prettiest fellows I ever saw in my life; and, I own, I scolded my maid for suffering him to wait in my entry.'

entry; and where is the mighty ridiculous matter, pray?

'None at all,' answered Booth, 'and I hope the next time he will be ushered into your inner apartment.'

'Why should he not, Sir?' replied she; 'for wherever he is ushered, I am convinced he will behave himself as a gentleman should.'

Here Amelia put an end to the discourse, or it might have proceeded to very great lengths: for Booth was of a waggish inclination; and Mrs. Ellison was not a lady of the nicest delicacy.

C H A P. VIII.

THE HEROICK BEHAVIOUR OF COLONEL BATH.

BOOOTH went this morning to pay a second visit to the colonel, where he found Colonel James. Both the colonel and the lieutenant appeared a little shocking at their first meeting, but matters were soon cleared up; for the former presently advanced to the latter, shook him heartily by the hand, and said, 'Mr. Booth, I am ashamed to see you; for I have injured you, and I heartily ask your pardon. I am now perfectly convinced, that what I hinted to my brother, and which I find had like to have produced such fatal consequences, was entirely groundless. If you will be contented with my asking your pardon, and spare me the disagreeable remembrance of what led me into my error, I shall esteem it as the highest obligation.'

Booth answered: 'As to what regards yourself, my dear colonel, I am abundantly satisfied; but as I am convinced some rascal hath been my enemy with you in the cruellest manner, I hope you will not deny me the opportunity of kicking him through the world.'

'By all the dignity of man,' cries Colonel Bath, 'the boy speaks with spirit, and his request is reasonable.'

Colonel James hesitated a moment, and then whispered Booth that he would give him all the satisfaction imaginable concerning the whole affair, when they were alone together; upon which, Booth addressing himself to Colonel Bath, the discourse turned on other

matters, during the remainder of the visit, which was but short, and then both went away together, leaving Colonel Bath as well as it was possible to expect, more to the satisfaction of Booth than of Colonel James, who would not have been displeased if his wound had been more dangerous: for he was grown somewhat weary of a disposition that he rather called captious than heroic, and which, as he every day more and more hated his wife, he apprehended might some time or other give him some trouble; for Bath was the most affectionate of brothers, and had often sworn in the presence of James, that he would eat any man alive who should hurt his sister ill.

Colonel Bath was well satisfied that his brother and the lieutenant were gone out with a design of tilting; from which he offered not a syllable to dissuade them, as he was convinced it was right, and that Booth could not in honour take, nor the colonel give, any less satisfaction. When they had been gone, therefore, about half an hour, he rang his bell, to enquire if there was any news of his brother; a question which he repeated every ten minutes, for the space of two hours; when having heard nothing of him, he began to conclude that both were killed on the spot.

Whilst he was in this state of anxiety his sister came to see him; for, notwithstanding his desire of keeping it a secret, the duel had blazed all over the town. After receiving some kind congratulations on his safety, and some unkind hints concerning the warmth of his temper, the colonel asked her when she had seen her husband. She answered, not that morning. He then communicated to her his suspicions; told her he was convinced his brother had drawn his sword that day; and that as neither of them had heard any thing from him, he began to apprehend the worst that could happen.

Neither Miss Bellamy, nor Mrs. Ciber, were ever in a greater consternation on the stage, than now appeared in the countenance of Mrs. James. 'Good heavens! brother,' cries she, 'what do you tell me! You have frightened me to death. Let your man get me a glass of water immediately, if you have not a mind to see me die before your face. When, where, how

'was this quarrel? Why did you not prevent it, if you knew of it? Is it not enough to be every day tormenting me with hazarding your own life, but must you bring the life of one who you know must be, and ought to be, so much the dearest of all to me, into danger? Take your sword, brother, take your sword, and plunge it into my bosom; it would be kinder of you, than to fill it with such dreads and terrors!' Here she swallowed the glass of water; and then threw herself back in her chair, as if she had intended to faint away.

Perhaps, if she had so, the colonel would have lent her no assistance: for she had hurt him more than by ten thousand stabs. He sat erect in his chair, with his eyebrows knit, his forehead wrinkled, his eyes flashing with fire, his teeth grating against each other, and breathing horror all around him. In this posture he sat for some time silent, casting disdainful looks at his sister. At last his voice found its way through a passion which had almost choked him, and he cried out: 'Sister, what have I done to deserve the opinion you express of me? Which of my actions hath made you conclude that I am a rascal and a coward? Look at that poor sword, which never woman yet saw but in its sheath; what hath that done to merit your desire that it should be contaminated with the blood of a woman?'

'Alas! brother,' cried she, 'I know not what you say; you are desirous, I believe, to terrify me out of the little senses I have left. What can I have said in the agonies of grief, into which you threw me; to deserve this passion?'

'What have you said!' answered the colonel; 'you have said that which if a man had spoken, nay, d—n me, if he had but hinted that he durst even think, I would have made him eat my sword: by all the dignity of a man, I would have crumbled his soul into powder. But I consider that the words were spoken by a woman, and I am calm again. Consider, my dear, that you are my sister, and behave yourself with more spirit. I have only mentioned to you my surmise. It may not have happened as I suspect; but let what

will have happened, you will have the comfort that your husband hath behaved himself with becoming dignity, and lies in the bed of honour.'

'Talk not to me of such comfort,' replied the lady; 'it is a loss I cannot survive. But why do I sit here lamenting myself? I will go this instant and know the worst of my fate, if my trembling limbs will carry me to my coach. Good morrow, dear brother! whatever becomes of me, I am glad to find you out of danger.' The colonel paid her his proper compliments, and she then left the room; but returned instantly back, saying, 'Brother, I must beg the favour of you to let your footman step to my mantua-maker; I am sure it is a miracle, in my present distracted condition, how it came into my head.' The footman was presently summoned, and Mrs. James delivered him his message, which was to countermand the orders which she had given that very morning, to make her up a new suit of brocade. 'Heaven knows,' says she, 'now, when I can wear brocade, or whether ever I shall wear it!' And now having repeated her message with great exactness, lest there should be any mistake, she again lamented her wretched situation, and then departed; leaving the colonel in full expectation of hearing speedy news of the fatal issue of the battle.

But though the reader should entertain the same curiosity, we must be excused from satisfying it, till we have first accounted for an incident which we have related in this very chapter, and which we think deserves some solution. The critick, I am convinced, already is apprized, that I mean the friendly behaviour of James to Booth, which, from what we had before recorded, seemed so little to be expected.

It must be remembered, that the anger which the former of these gentlemen had conceived against the latter, arose entirely from the false account given by Miss Matthews of Booth, whom that lady had accused to Colonel James of having as basely as wickedly traduced his character.

Now, of all the ministers of vengeance, there are none with whom the devil deals so treacherously, as with those whom he employs in executing the mischievous purposes of an angry mistress;

mistress; for no sooner is revenge executed on an offending lover, than it is sure to be repented; and all the anger which before raged against the beloved object, returns with double fury on the head of his assassin.

Miss Matthews, therefore, no sooner heard that Booth was killed, (for so was the report at first, and by a colonel of the army) than she immediately concluded it to be James. She was extremely shocked with the news, and her heart instantly began to relent. All the reasons on which she had founded her love, recurred in the strongest and liveliest colours to her mind, and all the causes of her hatred sunk down and disappeared; or if the least remembrance of any thing which had disobliterated her remained, her heart became his zealous advocate, and soon satisfied her that her own fates were more to be blamed than he, and that without being a villain, he could have acted no otherwise than he had done.

In this temper of mind, she looked on herself as the murderer of an innocent man; and, what to her was much worse, of the man she had loved, and still did love, with all the violence imaginable. She looked on James as the tool with which she had done this murder; and as it is usual for people who have rashly or inadvertently made any animate or inanimate thing the instrument of mischief, to hate the innocent means by which the mischief was effected; (for this is a subtle method which the mind invents to excuse ourselves, the last objects on whom we would willingly wreak our vengeance;) so Miss Matthews now hated and cursed James as the efficient cause of that act which she herself had contrived, and laboured to carry into execution.

She sat down therefore in a furious agitation, little short of madness, and wrote the following letter:

I Hope this will find you in the hands of justice, for the murder of one of the best friends that ever man was blessed with. In one sense, indeed, he may seem to have deserved his fate, by chusing a fool for his friend; for who but a fool would have believed what the anger and rage of an injured woman suggested? a story so improbable, that I

could scarce be thought in earnest when I mentioned it.

Know, then, cruel wretch, that poor Booth loved you of all men breathing; and was, I believe, in your commendation, guilty of as much falshood, as I was in what I told you concerning him.

If this knowledge makes you miserable, it is no more than you have made the unhappy

F. MATTHEWS.

CHAP. IX.

BEING THE LAST CHAPTER OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

WE shall now return to Colonel James and Mr. Booth, who walked together from Colonel Bath's lodging with much more peaceable intention than that gentleman had conjectured, who dreamt of nothing but swords, and guns, and implements of war.

The Birdcage Walk, in the Park, was the scene appointed by James for unburdening his mind. Thither they came, and there James acquainted Booth with all that which the reader knows already, and gave him the letter which we have inserted at the end of the last chapter.

Booth expressed great astonishment at this relation, not without venting some detestation of the wickedness of Miss Matthews; upon which James took him up, saying, he ought not to speak with such abhorrence of faults which love for him had occasioned.

Can you mention love, my dear colonel, cried Booth, and such a woman, in the same breath?

Yes, faith, can I! says James; for the devil take me, if I know a more lovely woman in the world. Here he began to describe her whole person; but as we cannot insert all the description, so we shall omit it all: and concluded with saying, Curse me, if I don't think her the finest creature in the universe. I would give half my estate, Booth, she loved me as well as she doth you; though, on second consideration, I believe I should repent that bargain; for then, very possibly, I should not care a farthing for her.

You

‘ You will pardon me, dear colonel,’ answered Booth; ‘ but to me there appears somewhat very singular in your way of thinking. Beauty is indeed the object of liking, great qualities of admiration, good ones of esteem; but the devil take me, if I think any thing but love to be the object of love.’

‘ Is there not something too selfish,’ replied James, ‘ in that opinion? But without considering it in that light, is it not of all things the most insipid? All oil, all sugar, zounds! it is enough to cloy the sharp-set appetite of a parson. Acids, surely, are most likely to quicken.’

‘ I do not love reasoning in allegories,’ cries Booth; ‘ but with regard to love, I declare I never found any thing cloying in it. I have lived almost alone with my wife near three years together, was never tired with her company, nor ever wished for any other; and I am sure, I never tasted any of the acid you mention to quicken my appetite.’

‘ This is all very extraordinary and romantick to me,’ answered the colonel. ‘ If I was to be shut up three years with the same woman, which Heaven forbid! nothing, I think, could keep me alive, but a temper as violent as that of Miss Matthews. As to love, it would make me sick to death in the twentieth part of that time. If I was so condemned, let me see, what would I wish the woman to be? I think no one virtue will be sufficient. With the spirit of a tigress, I would have her be a prude, a scold, a scholar, a critick, a wit, a politician, and a Jacobite; and then, perhaps, eternal opposition would keep up our spirits, and wishing one another daily at the devil, we should make a shift to drag on a damnable state of life, without much spleen or vapours.’

‘ And so you do not intend,’ cries Booth, ‘ to break with this woman?’

‘ Not more than I have already, if I can help it,’ answered the colonel.

‘ And you will be reconciled to her?’ said Booth.

‘ Yes, faith! will I, if I can,’ answered the colonel. ‘ I hope you have no objection?’

‘ None, my dear friend,’ said Booth, ‘ unless on your account.’

‘ I do believe you,’ said the colonel; ‘ and yet, let me tell you, you are a very extraordinary man, not to desire me to quit her on your account. Upon my soul, I begin to pity the woman, who hath placed her affection, perhaps, on the only man in England, of your age, who would not return it. But for my part, I promise you, I like her beyond all other women; and whilst that is the case, my boy, if her mind was as full of iniquity as Pandora’s box was of diseases, I’d hug her close in my arms, and only take as much care as possible to keep the lid down, for fear of mischief. But come, dear Booth, said he, let us consider your affairs, for I am ashamed of having neglected them so long; and the only anger I have against this wench is, that she was the occasion of it.’

Booth then acquainted the colonel with the promises he had received from the noble lord: upon which James shook him by the hand, and heartily wished him joy, crying, ‘ I do assure you, if you have his interest, you will need no other; I did not know you was acquainted with him.’

To which Mr. Booth answered, that he was but a new acquaintance, and that he was recommended to him by a lady.

‘ A lady!’ cries the colonel, ‘ well, I don’t ask her name. You are a happy man, Booth, amongst the women; and I assure you, you could have no stronger recommendation. The peer loves the ladies, I believe, as well as ever Mark Antony did; and it is not his fault, if he hath not spent as much upon them. If he once fixes his eye upon a woman, he will stick at nothing to get her.’

‘ Ay, indeed!’ cries Booth, ‘ is that his character?’

‘ Ay, faith!’ answered the colonel, ‘ and the character of most men besides him. Few of them, I mean, will stick at any thing beside their money.’

‘ *Jusque à la bourse*, is sometimes the boundary of love, as well as friendship. And, indeed, I never knew

any other man part with his money so very freely on these occasions. You see, dear Booth, the confidence I have in your honour.’

‘ I hope, indeed, you have,’ cries Booth; ‘ but I don’t see what instance you now give me of that confidence.’

‘ Have

'Have not I shewn you,' answered James, 'where you may carry your goods to market? I can assure you, my friend, that is a secret I would not impart to every man in your situation, and all circumstances considered.'

'I am very sorry, Sir,' cries Booth very gravely, 'and turning as pale as death, you should entertain a thought of this kind—a thought, which hath almost frozen up my blood! I am unwilling to believe there are such villains in the world; but there is none of them whom I should detest half so much as myself, if my own mind had ever suggested to me a hint of that kind. I have tasted of some distresses of life, and I know not to what greater I may be driven; but my honour, I thank Heaven, is in my own power; and I can boldly say to fortune, she shall not rob me of it.'

'Have I not expressed that confidence, my dear Booth?' answered the colonel. 'And what you say now well justifies my opinion; for I do agree with you, that, considering all things, it would be the highest instance of dishonour.'

'Dishonour indeed!' returned Booth. 'What, to prostitute my wife! Can I think there is such a wretch breathing?'

'I don't know that,' said the colonel; 'but I am sure, it was very far from my intention to insinuate the least hint of any such matter to you. Nor can I imagine how you yourself could conceive such a thought. The goods I meant, were no other than the charming person of Miss Matthews; for whom, I am convinced, my lord would bid a swingeing price against me.'

Booth's countenance greatly cleared up at this declaration; and he answered with a smile, that he hoped he need not give the colonel any assurances on that head. However, though he was satisfied with regard to the colonel's suspicions, yet some chimeras now arose in his brain, which gave him no very agreeable sensations. What these were, the sagacious reader may probably suspect; but if he should not, we may, perhaps, have occasion to open them in the sequel. Here we will put an end to this dialogue, and to the fifth book of this history.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.




A M E L I A.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

PANEGYRICKS ON BEAUTY, WITH OTHER GRAVE MATTERS.

HE colonel and Booth walked together to the latter's lodging; for as it was not that day in the week in which all parts of the town are indifferent, Booth could not wait on the colonel.

When they arrived in Spring Garden, Booth, to his great surprize, found no one at home but the maid. In truth, Amelia had accompanied Mrs. Ellifon and her children to his lordship's; for as her little girl shewed a great unwillingness to go without her, the fond mother was easily persuaded to make one of the company.

Booth had scarce ushered the colonel up to his apartment, when a servant from Mrs. James knocked hastily at the door. The lady, not meeting with her husband at her return home, began to despair of him, and performed every thing which was decent on the occasion. An apothecary was presently called with hartshorn and sal-volatile, a doctor was sent for, and messengers were dispatched every way; amongst the rest, one was sent to enquire at the lodgings of his supposed antagonist.

The servant, hearing that his master was alive and well above stairs, ran up eagerly to acquaint him with the dreadful situation in which he left his miserable lady at home, and likewise with the occasion of all her distress; saying,

that his lady had been at her brother's, and had there heard that his honour was killed in a duel by Captain Booth.

The colonel smiled at this account, and bid the servant make haste back to contradict it. And then, turning to Booth, he said, 'Was there ever such another fellow as this brother of mine? I thought indeed, his behaviour was somewhat odd at the time.' 'I suppose he overheard me whisper that I would give you satisfaction, and thence concluded, we went together with a design of tilting. D—n the fellow! I begin to grow heartily sick of him, and wish I could get well rid of him without cutting his throat; which I sometimes apprehend he will insist on my doing, as a return for my getting him made a lieutenant-colonel.'

Whilst these two gentlemen were commenting on the character of the third, Amelia and her company returned, and all presently came up stairs; not only the children, but the two ladies, laden with trinkets, as if they had been come from a fair. Amelia, who had been highly delighted all the morning with the excessive pleasure which her children enjoyed; when she saw Colonel James with her husband, and perceived the most manifest marks of that reconciliation which she knew had been so long and so earnestly wished by Booth, became so transported with joy, that her happiness was scarce capable of addition. Exercise had painted her face with vermillion; and the highest good-humour had so sweetened

sweetened every feature, and a vast flow of spirits had so lightened up her bright eyes, that she was all a blaze of beauty. She seemed, indeed, as Milton sublimely describes Eve,

—————adorn'd

With what all earth or heaven could bestow
To make her amiable.

Again,

Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In ev'ry gesture, dignity and love.

Or, as Waller sweetly, though less sublimely, sings:

Sweetness, truth, and every grace,
Which time and use are wont to teach,
The eye may in a moment reach,
And read distinctly in her face.

Or to mention one poet more, and him of all the sweetest: she seemed to be the very person of whom Suckling wrote the following lines, where, speaking of Cupid, he says,

All his lovely looks, his pleasing fires,
All his sweet motions, all his taking smiles,
All that awakes, all that inflames desires,
All that sweetly commands, all that beguiles,
He does into one pair of eyes convey,
And there begs leave that he himself may stay.

Such was Amelia at this time when she entered the room; and having paid her respects to the colonel, she went up to her husband, and cried, 'O my dear! never were any creatures so happy as your little things have been this whole morning; and all owing to my lord's goodness; sure, never was any thing so good-natured, and so generous!' She then made the children produce their presents, the value of which amounted to a pretty large sum; for there was a gold watch amongst the trinkets that cost above twenty guineas.

Instead of discovering so much satisfaction on this occasion as Amelia expected, Booth very gravely answered: 'And pray, my dear, how are we to repay all these obligations to his lordship?'—'How can you ask so strange a question?' cries Mrs. Elison: 'how little do you know of the

soul of generosity, (for sure my cousin deserves that name) when you call a few little trinkets given to children an obligation!'—'Indeed, my dear,' cries Amelia, 'I would have stopped his hand, if it had been possible; nay, I was forced at last absolutely to refuse, or I believe he would have laid a hundred pounds out on the children; for I never saw any one so fond of children, which convinces me he is one of the best of men. But I ask you pardon, colonel,' said she, turning to him; 'I should not entertain you with these subjects; yet I know you have goodness enough to excuse the folly of a mother.'

The colonel made a very low assenting bow; and soon after, they all sat down to a small repast; for the colonel had promised Booth to dine with him when they first came home together; and what he had since heard from his own house, gave him still less inclination than ever to repair thither.

But besides both these, there was a third and stronger inducement to him to pass the day with his friend; and this was the desire of passing it with his friend's wife. When the colonel had first seen Amelia in France, she was but just recovered from a consumptive habit, and looked pale and thin; besides, his engagements with Miss Bath at that time took total possession of him, and guarded his heart from the impressions of another woman; and when he had dined with her in town, the vexations through which she had lately passed, had somewhat deadened her beauty; besides, he was then engaged, as we have seen, in a very warm pursuit of a new mistress: but now he had no such impediment; for though the reader hath just before seen his warm declarations of a passion for Miss Matthews, yet it may be remembered that he had been in possession of her for above a fortnight; and one of the happy properties of this kind of passion is, that it can with equal violence love half a dozen, or half a score, different objects, at one and the same time.

But, indeed, such were the charms now displayed by Amelia, of which we endeavoured above to draw some faint resemblance, that perhaps no other beauty could have secured him from their influence; and here, to confess a truth in his favour, however the grave,

or rather the hypocritical part of mankind may censure it, I am firmly persuaded, that to withdraw admiration from exquisite beauty, or to feel no delight in gazing at it, is as impossible as to feel no warmth from the most scorching rays of the sun. To run away, is all that is in our power; and yet in the former case, if it must be allowed we have the power of running away, it must be allowed also, that it requires the strongest resolution to execute it; for when, as Dryden says,

All paradise is opened in a face,

how natural is the desire of going thither! and how difficult to quit the lovely prospect!

And yet, however difficult this may be, my young readers, it is absolutely necessary, and that immediately too; flatter not yourselves that fire will not scorch as well as warm; and the longer we stay within it's reach, the more we shall burn. The admiration of a beautiful woman, though the wife of our dearest friend, may at first perhaps be innocent; but let us not flatter ourselves it will always remain so: desire is sure to succeed; and wishes, hopes, designs, with a long train of mischiefs, tread close at our heels. In affairs of this kind, we may most properly apply the well-known remark of *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*. It fares indeed with us on this occasion, as with the unwary traveller in some parts of Arabia the Desert, whom the treacherous sands imperceptibly betray till he is overwhelmed and lost. In both cases, the only safety is by withdrawing our feet, the very first moment we perceive them sliding.

This digression may appear impertinent to some readers; we could not, however, avoid the opportunity of offering the above hints; since of all passions there is none against which we should so strongly fortify ourselves as this, which is generally called love; for no other lays before us, especially in the tumultuous days of youth, such sweet, such strong, and almost irresistible temptations; none hath produced in private life such fatal and lamentable tragedies; and, what is worst of all, there is none to whose poison and insatiation the best of minds are so liable,

Ambition scarce ever produces any evil; but when it reigns in cruel and savage bosoms; and avarice seldom flourishes at all but in the basest and poorest soil. Love, on the contrary, sprouts usually up in the richest and noblest minds; but there, unless nicely watched, pruned, and cultivated, and carefully kept clear of those vicious weeds which are too apt to surround it, it branches forth into wildness and disorder, produces nothing desirable, but chokes up and kills whatever is good and noble in the mind where it so abounds. In short, to drop the allegory, not only tenderness and good-nature, but bravery, generosity, and every virtue, are often made the instruments of effecting the most atrocious purposes of this all-subduing tyrant.

CHAP. II.

WHICH WILL NOT APPEAR, WE PRESUME, UNNATURAL TO ALL MARRIED READERS.

IF the table of poor Booth afforded but an indifferent repast to the colonel's hunger, here was most excellent entertainment of a much higher kind. The colonel began now to wonder within himself at his not having before discovered such incomparable beauty and excellence. This wonder was indeed so natural, that lest it should arise likewise in the reader, we thought proper to give the solution of it in the preceding chapter.

During the first two hours, the colonel scarce ever had his eyes off from Amelia; for he was taken by surprise, and his heart was gone before he suspected himself to be in any danger. His mind, however, no sooner suggested a certain secret to him, than it suggested some degree of prudence to him at the same time; and the knowledge that he had thoughts to conceal, and the care of concealing them, had birth at one and the same instant. During the residue of the day, therefore, he grew more circumspect, and contented himself with now and then stealing a look by chance, especially as the more than ordinary gravity of Booth made him fear that his former behaviour had betrayed to Booth's observa-

tion

tion the great and sudden liking he had conceived for his wife, even before he had observed it himself.

Amelia continued the whole day in the highest spirits and highest good-humour imaginable; never once remarking that appearance of discontent in her husband, of which the colonel had taken notice; so much more quick-sighted, as we have somewhere else hinted, is guilt than innocence! Whether Booth had in reality made any such observations on the colonel's behaviour as he had suspected, we will not undertake to determine; yet so far may be material to say, as we can with sufficient certainty, that the change in Booth's behaviour that day, from what was usual with him, was remarkable enough. None of his former vivacity appeared in his conversation; and his countenance was altered from being the picture of sweetness and good-humour, not indeed to sourness or moroseness, but to gravity and melancholy.

Though the colonel's suspicion had the effect which we have mentioned on his behaviour, yet it could not persuade him to depart. In short, he sat in his chair as if confined to it by enchantment, stealing looks now and then, and humouring his growing passion, without having command enough over his limbs to carry him out of the room, till decency at last forced him to put an end to his preposterous visit. When the husband and wife were left alone together, the latter resumed the subject of her children, and gave Booth a particular narrative of all that had passed at his lordship's, which he, though something had certainly disconcerted him, affected to receive with all the pleasure he could; and this affectation, however awkwardly he acted his part, passed very well on Amelia: for she could not well conceive a displeasure, of which she had not the least hint of any cause; and indeed at a time when, from his reconciliation with James, she imagined her husband to be entirely and perfectly happy.

The greatest part of that night Booth passed awake; and, if during the residue he might be said to sleep, he could scarce be said to enjoy repose: his eyes were no sooner closed, than he was pursued and haunted by the most frightful and terrifying dreams, which threw

him into so restless a condition, that he soon disturbed his Amelia, and greatly alarmed her with apprehensions that he had been seized by some dreadful disease; though he had not the least symptoms of a fever by any extraordinary heat, or any other indication, but was rather colder than usual.

As Booth assured his wife that he was very well, but found no inclination to sleep, she likewise bid adieu to her slumbers, and attempted to entertain him with her conversation; upon which his lordship occurred as the first topic; and she repeated to him all the stories which she had heard from Mrs. Ellison, of the peer's goodness to his sister, and his nephew and niece. 'It is impossible, my dear,' says she, 'to describe their fondness for their uncle, which is to me an incontestible sign of a parent's goodness.' In this manner she ran on for several minutes; concluding at last, that it was pity so very few had such generous minds joined to immense fortunes.

Booth, instead of making a direct answer to what Amelia had said, cried coldly, 'But do you think, my dear, it was right to accept all those expensive toys which the children brought home? And I ask you again, what return we are to make for these obligations?'

'Indeed, my dear,' cries Amelia, 'you see this matter in too serious a light. Though I am the last person in the world who would lessen his lordship's goodness, (indeed I shall always think we are both infinitely obliged to him) yet sure you must allow the expence to be a mere trifle to such a vast fortune. As for return, his own benevolence, in the satisfaction it receives, more than repays itself; and I am convinced he expects no other.'

'Very well, my dear,' cries Booth, 'you shall have it your way: I must confess I never yet saw any reason to blame your discernment; and, perhaps, I have been in the wrong, to give myself so much uneasiness on this account.'

'Uneasiness, child!' said Amelia eagerly. 'Good Heavens! hath this made you uneasy?'

'I do own it hath,' answered Booth; 'and it hath been the only cause of breaking my repose.'

'Why then, I wish,' cries Amelia, 'all the things had been at the devil, before ever the children had seen them; and whatever I may think myself, I promise you, they shall never more accept the value of a farthing. If upon this occasion I have been the cause of your uneasiness, you will do me the justice to believe that I was totally innocent.'

At those words Booth caught her in his arms; and with the tenderest embrace, emphatically repeating the word *innocent*, cried, 'Heaven forbid I should think otherwise! O thou art the best of creatures that ever blessed a man!'

'Well but,' said she smiling, 'do confess, my dear, the truth; I promise you, I won't blame you, nor disesteem you for it! but is not pride really at the bottom of this fear of an obligation?'

'Perhaps it may,' answered he; 'or if you will, you may call it fear. I own I am afraid of obligations, as the worst kind of debts; for I have generally observed those who confer them, expect to be repaid ten thousand fold.'

Here ended all that is material of their discourse; and a little time afterwards, they both fell fast asleep in one another's arms; from which time Booth had no more restlessness, nor any farther perturbation in his dreams.

Their repose, however, had been so much disturbed in the former part of the night, that as it was very late before they enjoyed that sweet sleep I have just mentioned, they lay a-bed the next day till noon, when they both arose with the utmost cheerfulness; and while Amelia bestirred herself in the affairs of her family, Booth went to visit the wounded colonel.

He found that gentleman still proceeding very fast in his recovery, with which he was more pleased than he had reason to be with his reception; for the colonel received him very coldly indeed; and when Booth told him he had received perfect satisfaction from his brother, Bath erected his head, and answered with a sneer, 'Very well, Sir; if you think these matters can be so made up, d—n me, if it is any business of mine. My dignity hath not been injured.'

'No one, I believe,' cries Booth, 'dare injure it.'

'You believe so!' said the colonel; 'I think, Sir, you might be assured of it; but this, at least, you may be assured of, that if any man did, I would tumble him down the precipice of hell, d—n me! that you may be assured of.'

As Booth found the colonel in this disposition, he had no great inclination to lengthen out his visit, nor did the colonel himself seem to desire it; so he soon returned back to his Amelia, whom he found performing the office of a cook, with as much pleasure as a fine lady generally enjoys in dressing herself out for a ball.

CHAP. III.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY LOOKS
A LITTLE BACKWARDS.

BEFORE we proceed farther in our history, we shall recount a short scene to our reader, which passed between Amelia and Mrs. Ellison whilst Booth was on his visit to Colonel Bath. We have already observed, that Amelia had conceived an extraordinary affection for Mrs. Bennet, which still increased every time she saw her. She thought she discovered something wonderfully good and gentle in her countenance and disposition, and was very desirous of knowing her whole history.

She had a very short interview with that lady this morning in Mrs. Ellison's apartment. As soon, therefore, as Mrs. Bennet was gone, Amelia acquainted Mrs. Ellison with the good opinion she had conceived of her friend, and likewise with her curiosity to know her story: 'For there must be something uncommonly good,' said she, 'in one who can so truly mourn for a husband above three years after his death.'

'O!' cries Mrs. Ellison, 'to be sure, the world must allow her to have been one of the best of wives. And indeed, upon the whole, she is a good sort of woman; and what I like her the best for, is a strong resemblance that she bears to yourself in the form of her person, and still more in her voice. But for my own part, I know nothing remarkable in her fortune, unless what I have told you; that she was the daughter of a clergyman, had
little

' little or no fortune, and married a poor parson for love, who left her in the utmost distress. If you please, I will shew you a letter which she writ to me at that time, though I insist upon your promise never to mention it to her; indeed, you will be the first person I ever shewed it to.' She then opened her scrutoire, and taking out the letter delivered it to Amelia, saying, ' There, Madam, is, I believe, as fine a picture of distress as can well be drawn.'

DEAR MADAM,

AS I have no other friend on earth but yourself, I hope you will pardon my writing to you at this season; though I do not know that you can relieve my distresses, or, if you can, have I any pretence to expect that you should. My poor dear, O Heavens! — my — lies dead in the house, and after I had procured sufficient to bury him, a set of ruffians have entered my house, seized all I have, have seized his dear, dear corpse, and threaten to deny it burial. For Heaven's sake, send me, at least, some advice; little Tommy stands now by me crying for bread, which I have not to give him. I can say no more, than that I am, your most distressed humble servant,

M. BENNET.

Amelia read the letter over twice, and then returning it, with tears in her eyes, asked how the poor creature could possibly get through such distress.

' You may depend upon it, Madam,' said Mrs. Ellison, ' the moment I read this account, I posted away immediately to the lady. As to the seizing the body, that I found was a mere bugbear; but all the rest was literally true. I sent immediately for the same gentleman that I recommended to Mr. Booth, left the care of burying the corpse to him, and brought my friend and her little boy immediately away to my own house, where she remained some months in the most miserable condition. I then prevailed with her to retire into the country, and procured her a lodging with a friend at St. Edmond's Bury, the air and gaiety of which place, by degrees recovered her; and she returned in

' about a twelvemonth to town, as well, I think, as she is at present.'

' I am almost afraid to ask,' cries Amelia; ' and yet I long, methinks, to know what is become of the poor little boy.'

' He hath been dead,' said Mrs. Ellison, ' a little more than half a year; and the mother lamented him at first almost as much as she did her husband; but I found it indeed rather an easier matter to comfort her, though I sate up with her near a fortnight upon the latter occasion.'

' You are a good creature,' said Amelia; ' and I love you dearly.'

' Alas, Madam,' cries she, ' what could I have done, if it had not been for the goodness of that best of men, my noble cousin! His lordship no sooner heard of the widow's distress from me, than he immediately settled one hundred and fifty pounds a year upon her during her life.'

' Well! how noble, how generous was that!' said Amelia. ' I declare I begin to love your cousin, Mrs. Ellison.'

' And I declare if you do,' answered she, ' there is no love lost, I verily believe; if you had heard what I heard him say yesterday behind your back —'

' Why, what did he say, Mrs. Ellison?' cries Amelia.

' He said,' answered the other, ' that you was the finest woman his eyes ever beheld. Ah! it is in vain to wish, and yet I cannot help wishing too. O Mrs. Booth! if you had been a single woman, I firmly believe I could have made you the happiest in the world. And I sincerely think, I never saw a woman who deserved it more.'

' I am obliged to you, Madam,' cries Amelia, ' for your good opinion; but I really look on myself already as the happiest woman in the world. Our circumstances, it is true, might have been a little more fortunate; but, O my dear Mrs. Ellison, what fortune can be put in the balance with such a husband as mine!'

' I am afraid, dear Madam,' answered Mrs. Ellison, ' you would not hold the scale fairly. I acknowledge, indeed, Mr. Booth is a very pretty gentleman; Heaven forbid I should endeavour to lessen him in your opinion! yet, if I was to be brought

‘to confession, I could not help saying, I see where the superiority lies, and that the men have more reason to envy Mr. Booth, than the women have to envy his lady.’

‘Nay, I will not bear this,’ replied Amelia: ‘you will forfeit all my love, if you have the least disrespectful opinion of my husband. You do not know him, Mrs. Ellifon; he is the best, the kindest, the worthiest of all his sex. I have observed, indeed, once or twice before, that you have taken some dislike to him. I cannot conceive for what reason. If he hath said or done any thing to disoblige you, I am sure I can justly acquit him of design. His extreme vivacity makes him sometimes a little too heedless; but, I am convinced, a more innocent heart, or one more void of offence, was never in a human bosom.’

‘Nay, if you grow serious,’ cries Mrs. Ellifon, ‘I have done. How is it possible you should suspect I had taken any dislike to a man to whom I have always shewn so perfect a regard! But to say I think him, or almost any other man in the world, worthy of yourself, is not within my power with truth. And since you force the confession from me, I declare, I think such beauty, such sense, and such goodness united, might aspire without vanity to the arms of any monarch in Europe.’

‘Alas! my dear Mrs. Ellifon,’ answered Amelia, ‘do you think happiness and a crown so closely united? How many miserable women have lain in the arms of kings! Indeed, Mrs. Ellifon, if I had all the merit you compliment me with, I should think it all fully rewarded with such a man as, I thank Heaven, hath fallen to my lot; nor would I, upon my soul, exchange that lot with any queen in the universe.’

‘Well, there are enow of our sex,’ said Mrs. Ellifon, ‘to keep you in countenance; but I shall never forget the beginning of a song of Mr. Congreve’s, that my husband was so fond of, that he was always singing it.

‘Love’s but a frailty of the mind,
‘When ’tis not with ambition join’d.

‘Love without interest makes but an unfavoury dish, in my opinion.’

‘And pray how long hath this been your opinion?’ said Amelia, smiling.

‘Ever since I was born,’ answered Mrs. Ellifon; ‘at least, ever since I can remember.’

‘And have you never,’ said Amelia, ‘deviated from this generous way of thinking?’

‘Never once,’ answered the other, ‘in the whole course of my life.’

‘O Mrs. Ellifon! Mrs. Ellifon!’ cries Amelia; ‘why do we ever blame those who are disingenuous in confessing their faults, when we are so often ashamed to own ourselves in the right? Some women now, in my situation, would be angry that you had not made confidantes of them; but I never desire to know more of the secrets of others, than they are pleased to entrust me with. You must believe, however, that I should not have given you these hints of my knowing all, if I had disapproved of your choice. On the contrary, I assure you, I highly approve it. The gentility he wants, it will be easy in your power to procure for him; and as for his good qualities, I will myself be bound for them; and I make not the least doubt, as you have owned to me yourself that you have placed your affections on him, you will be one of the happiest women in the world.’

‘Upon my Honour,’ cries Mrs. Ellifon, very gravely, ‘I do not understand one word of what you mean.’

‘Upon my honour, you astonish me!’ said Amelia; ‘but I have done.’

‘Nay, then,’ said the other, ‘I insist upon knowing what you mean.’

‘Why, what can I mean,’ answered Amelia, ‘but your marriage with Serjeant Atkinson?’

‘With Serjeant Atkinson!’ cries Mrs. Ellifon, eagerly; ‘my marriage with a serjeant!’

‘Well, with Mr. Atkinson then; Captain Atkinson, if you please; for so I hope to see him.’

‘And have you really no better opinion of me,’ said Mrs. Ellifon, ‘than to imagine me capable of such condescension? What have I done, dear Mrs. Booth, to deserve so low a place in your esteem? I find, indeed, as Solomon says, *Women ought to watch the door of their lips*. How little did I imagine, that a little harmless freedom in discourse could persuade any one that I could entertain a serious in-

‘tention

'tention of disgracing my family! for
'of a very good family am I come, I
'assure you, Madam, though I now
'let lodgings. Few of my lodgers, I
'believe, ever came of a better.'

'If I have offended you, Madam,'
said Amelia, 'I am very sorry, and ask
'your pardon; but besides what I heard
'from yourself, Mr. Booth told me.'

'O yes!' answered Mrs. Ellison;
'Mr. Booth, I know, is a very good
'friend of mine. Indeed, I know you
'better, than to think it could be your
'own suspicion. I am very much ob-
'liged to Mr. Booth, truly.'

'Nay,' cries Amelia, 'the serjeant
'himself is in fault; for Mr. Booth,
'I am positive, only repeated what he
'had from him.'

'Impudent coxcomb!' cries Mrs.
Ellison; 'I shall know how to keep
'such fellows at a proper distance for
'the future. I will tell you, dear
'Madam, all that happened. When
'I rose in the morning, I found the
'fellow waiting in the entry; and, as
'you had expressed some regard for him
'as your foster-brother, (nay, he is a
'very genteel fellow, that I must own)
'I scolded my maid for not shewing
'him into my little back room; and I
'then asked him to walk into the par-
'lour. Could I have imagined he
'would have construed such little civi-
'lity into an encouragement!'

'Nay, I will have justice done to
'my poor brother, too,' said Amelia.
'I myself have seen you give him much
'greater encouragement than that.'

'Well, perhaps I have,' said Mrs.
Ellison; 'I have been always too un-
'guarded in my speech, and cannot
'answer for all I have said.' She then
began to change her note, and with an
affected laugh turned all into ridicule;
and soon afterwards the two ladies se-
parated, both in apparent good-hu-
mour; and Amelia went about those
domestic offices, in which Mr. Booth
found her engaged at the end of the
preceding chapter.

CHAP. IV.

CONTAINING A VERY EXTRAOR-
DINARY INCIDENT.

IN the afternoon, Mr. Booth, with
Amelia and her children, went to
refresh themselves in the Park. The

conversation now turned on what passed
in the morning with Mrs. Ellison; the
latter part of the dialogue, I mean, re-
corded in the last chapter. Amelia told
her husband, that Mrs. Ellison so
strongly denied all intentions to marry
the serjeant, that she had convinced
her the poor fellow was under an error,
and had mistaken a little too much le-
vity for serious encouragement; and
concluded, by desiring Booth not to
jest with her any more on that subject.

Booth burst into a laugh at what his
wife said. 'My dear creature,' said
he, 'how easy is thy honesty and sim-
'plicity to be imposed on! how little
'dost thou guess at the art and false-
'hood of women! I knew a young la-
'dy, who, against her father's con-
'sent, was married to a brother officer
'of mine; and as I often used to walk
'with her, (for I knew her father in-
'timately well) she would of her own
'accord take frequent occasions to ri-
'dicule and vilify her husband, (for
'so he was at the time) and expressed
'great wonder and indignation at the
'report which she allowed to prevail,
'that she should condescend ever to
'look at such a fellow, with any other
'design than of laughing at and de-
'spising him. The marriage after-
'wards became publicly owned, and
'the lady was reputably brought to
'bed: since which I have often seen her,
'nor hath she ever appeared to be in
'the least ashamed of what she had for-
'merly said; though, indeed, I be-
'lieve she hates me heartily for having
'heard it.'

'But for what reason,' cries Ame-
lia, 'should she deny a fact, when she
'must be so certain of our discovering
'it, and that immediately?'

'I cannot answer what end she may
'propose,' said Booth. 'Sometimes
'one would be almost persuaded that
'there was a pleasure in lying itself.
'But this I am certain, that I would
'believe the honest serjeant on his bare
'word, sooner than I would fifty
'Mrs. Ellison's on oath. I am con-
'vinced he would not have said what
'he did to me, without the strongest
'encouragement; and, I think, after
'what we have been both witnesses to,
'it requires no great confidence in his
'veracity, to give him an unlimited
'credit with regard to the lady's be-
'haviour.'

To this Amelia made no reply; and
they

they discoursed of other matters during the remainder of a very pleasant walk.

When they returned home, Amelia was surprized to find an appearance of disorder in her apartment. Several of the trinkets, which his lordship had given the children, lay about the room; and a suit of her own cloaths, which she had left in her drawers, was now displayed upon the bed.

She immediately summoned her little girl up stairs, who, as she plainly perceived the moment she came up with a candle, had half cried her eyes out; for though the girl had opened the door to them, as it was almost dark, she had not taken any notice of this phenomenon in her countenance.

The girl now fell down upon her knees, and cried, 'For Heaven's sake, Madam! do not be angry with me. Indeed, I was left alone in the house, and hearing somebody knock at the door, I opened it, I am sure, thinking no harm. I did not know but it might have been you, or my master, or Madam Ellison; and immediately as I did, the rogue burst in, and ran directly up stairs, and what he hath robbed you of I cannot tell; but I am sure I could not help it, for he was a great swinging man, with a pistol in each hand; and if I had dared to call out, to be sure he would have killed me. I am sure I never was in such a fright in my born days, whereof I am hardly come to myself yet. I believe he is somewhere about the house yet, for I never saw him go out.'

Amelia discovered some little alarm at this narrative, but much less than many other ladies would have shewn; for a fright is, I believe, sometimes laid hold of as an opportunity of disclosing several charms peculiar to that occasion; and which, as Mr. Addison says of certain virtues,

—shun the day, and lie conceal'd,
In the smooth seasons and the calms of life.

Booth having opened the window, and summoned in two chairmen to his assistance, proceeded to search the house; but all to no purpose: the thief was flown, though the poor girl, in her state of terror, had not seen him escape.

But now a circumstance appeared, which greatly surprized both Booth and

Amelia; indeed, I believe, it will have the same effect on the reader; and this was, that the thief had taken nothing with him. He had, indeed, tumbled over all Booth's and Amelia's cloaths, and the children's toys, but had left all behind him.

Amelia was scarce more pleased than astonished at this discovery, and re-examined the girl; assuring her of an absolute pardon, if she confessed the truth; but grievously threatening her if she was found guilty of the least falsehood. 'As for a thief, child,' says she, 'that is certainly not true: you have had somebody with you, to whom you have been shewing the things; therefore, tell me plainly who it was.'

The girl protested in the solemnest manner that she knew not the person; but as to some circumstances she began to vary a little from her first account, particularly as to the pistols; concerning which, being strictly examined by Booth, she at last cried, 'To be sure, Sir, he must have had pistols about him.' And instead of persisting in his having rushed in upon her, she now confessed, that he had asked at the door for her master and mistress; and that at his desire she had shewn him up stairs, where he at first said he would stay till their return home. 'But, indeed,' cried she, 'I thought no harm; for he looked like a gentleman-like sort of man: and, indeed, so I thought he was for a good while, whereof he sat down and behaved himself very civilly, till he saw some of master's and miss's things upon the chest of drawers; whereof he cried, "Heyday! what's here?" and then he fell to tumbling about the things like any mad. Then I thinks, thinks I to myself, to be sure he is a highwayman, whereof I did not dare to speak to him; for I knew Madam Ellison and her maid was gone out, and what could such a poor girl as I do against a great strong man! And besides, thinks I, to be sure he hath got pistols about him, though I cannot indeed (that I will not do for the world) take my bible oath that I saw any; yet, to be sure, he would have soon pulled them out, and shot me dead, if I had ventured to have said any thing to offend him.'

'I know not what to make of this,'

cries

cries Booth. 'The poor girl, I verily believe, speaks to the best of her knowledge. A thief it could not be; for he hath not taken the least thing, and it is plain he had the girl's watch in his hand. If it had been a bailiff, surely he would have staid till our return. I can conceive no other from the girl's account, than that it must have been some madman.'

'O good Sir!' said the girl, 'now you mention it, if he was not a thief, to be sure he must have been a madman; for indeed he looked, and behaved himself too, very much like a madman: for now I remember, he talked to himself, and said many strange kind of words that I did not understand. Indeed, he looked altogether as I have seen people in Bedlam: besides, if he was not a madman, what good could it do him to throw the things all about the room in such a manner? And he said something too about my master, just before he went down stairs; I was in such a fright, I cannot remember particularly; but I am sure they were very ill words: he said he would do for him, I am sure he said that, and other wicked bad words too, if I could but think of them.'

'Upon my word,' said Booth, 'this is the most probable conjecture; but still I am puzzled to conceive who it should be: for I have no madman to my knowledge of my acquaintance; and it seems, as the girl says, he asked for me.' He then turned to the child, and asked her if she was certain of that circumstance.

The poor maid, after a little hesitation, answered, 'Indeed, Sir, I cannot be very positive; for the fright he threw me into afterwards, drove every thing almost out of my mind.'

'Well, whatever he was,' cries Amelia, 'I am glad the consequence is no worse; but let this be a warning to you, little Betty, and teach you to take more care for the future. If ever you should be left alone in the house again, be sure to let no persons in, without first looking out at the window, and seeing who they are. I promised not to chide you any more on this occasion, and I will keep my word; but it is very plain you desired this person to walk

up into our apartment, which was very wrong, in our absence.'

Betty was going to answer, but Amelia would not let her, saying, 'Don't attempt to excuse yourself; for I mortally hate a liar, and can forgive any fault sooner than falsehood.'

The poor girl then submitted; and now Amelia with her assistance began to replace all things in their order; and little Emily, hugging her watch with great fondness, declared she would never part with it any more.

Thus ended this odd adventure, not entirely to the satisfaction of Booth: for, besides his curiosity, which, when thoroughly roused, is a very troublesome passion, he had, as is, I believe, usual with all persons in his circumstances, several doubts and apprehensions of he knew not what. Indeed, fear is never more uneasy, than when it doth not certainly know it's object: for on such occasions the mind is ever employed in raising a thousand bugbears and phantoms, much more dreadful than any realities; and like children, when they tell tales of hobgoblins, seems industrious in terrifying itself.

CHAP. V.

CONTAINING SOME MATTERS NOT VERY UNNATURAL.

MATTERS were scarce sooner reduced into order and decency, than a violent knocking was heard at the door; such indeed as would have persuaded any one not accustomed to the sound, that the madman was returned in the highest spring-tide of his fury.

Instead, however, of so disagreeable an appearance, a very fine lady presently came into the room, no other indeed than Mrs. James herself; for she was resolved to shew Amelia, by the speedy return of her visit, how unjust all her accusations had been of any failure in the duties of friendship: she had moreover another reason to accelerate this visit, and that was, to congratulate her friend on the event of the duel between Colonel Bath and Mr. Booth.

The lady had so well profited by

Mrs. Booth's remonstrance, that she had now no more of that stiffness and formality which she had worn on a former occasion. On the contrary, she now behaved with the utmost freedom and good-humour, and made herself so very agreeable, that Amelia was highly pleased and delighted with her company.

An incident happened during this visit, that may appear to some too inconsiderable in itself to be recorded; and yet, as it certainly produced a very strong consequence in the mind of Mr. Booth, we cannot prevail on ourselves to pass it by.

Little Emily, who was present in the room while Mrs. James was there, as she stood near that lady, happened to be playing with her watch, which she was so greatly overjoyed had escaped safe from the madman. Mrs. James, who expressed great fondness for the child, desired to see the watch, which she commended as the prettiest of the kind she had ever seen.

Amelia caught eager hold of this opportunity to spread the praises of her benefactor. She presently acquainted Mrs. James with the donor's name, and ran on with great encomiums on his lordship's goodness, and particularly on his generosity. To which Mrs. James answered, 'O, certainly, Madam! his lordship hath universally the character of being extremely generous—where he likes!'

In uttering these words, she laid a very strong emphasis on the three last monosyllables, accompanying them at the same time with a very sagacious look, a very significant leer, and a great flirt with her fan.

The greatest genius the world hath ever produced, observes in one of his most excellent plays, that

—Trifles light as air,
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ.

That Mr. Booth began to be possessed by this worst of fiends, admits, I think, no longer doubt; for at this speech of Mrs. James, he immediately turned pale, and from a high degree of cheerfulness, was all on a sudden struck dumb, so that he spoke not another word till Mrs. James left the room.

The moment that lady drove from the door, Mrs. Ellison came up stairs. She entered the room with a laugh, and very plentifully rallied both Booth and Amelia concerning the madman, of which she had received a full account below stairs; and at last asked Amelia, if she could not guess who it was; but, without receiving an answer, went on, saying, 'For my own part, I fancy it must be some lover of yours; some person that hath seen you, and so is run mad with love. Indeed, I should not wonder if all mankind were to do the same.—La! Mr. Booth, what makes you grave? why, you are as melancholy as if you had been robbed in earnest. Upon my word, though, to be serious; it is a strange story; and as the girl tells it, I know not what to make of it. Perhaps it might be some rogue that intended to rob the house, and his heart failed him; yet, even that would be very extraordinary.—What, did you lose nothing, Madam?'

'Nothing at all,' answered Amelia. 'He did not even take the child's watch.'

'Well, captain,' cries Mrs. Ellison, 'I hope you will take more care of the house to-morrow; for your lady and I shall leave you alone to the care of it.—Here, Madam,' said she, 'here is a present from my lord to us; here are two tickets for the masquerade at Ranelagh. You will be so charmed with it—it is the sweetest of all diversions.'

'May I be damned, Madam,' cries Booth, 'if my wife shall go thither!'

Mrs. Ellison stared at these words; and, indeed, so did Amelia; for they were spoke with great vehemence. At length the former cried out with an air of astonishment, 'Not let your lady go to Ranelagh, Sir?'

'No, Madam,' cries Booth; 'I will not let my wife go to Ranelagh.'

'You surprize me!' cries Mrs. Ellison. 'Sure you are not in earnest!'

'Indeed, Madam,' returned he, 'I am seriously in earnest. And what is more, I am convinced she would of her own accord refuse to go.'

'Now, Madam,' said Mrs. Ellison, 'you are to answer for yourself; and I will for your husband, that, if you have

'have a desire to go, he will not refuse you.'

'I hope, Madam,' answered Amelia, with great gravity, 'I shall never desire to go to any place contrary to Mr. Booth's inclinations.'

'Did ever mortal hear the like!' said Mrs. Ellison; 'you are enough to spoil the best husband in the universe. Inclinations! What, is a woman to be governed by her husband's inclinations, though they are ever so unreasonable?'

'Pardon me, Madam,' said Amelia; 'I will not suppose Mr. Booth's inclinations ever can be unreasonable. I am very much obliged to you for the offer you have made me, but I beg you will not mention it more; for, after what Mr. Booth hath declared, if Ranelagh was a heaven upon earth, I would refuse to go to it.'

'I thank you, my dear,' cries Booth; 'I do assure you, you oblige me beyond my power of expression by what you say; but I will endeavour to shew you both my sensibility of such goodness, and my lasting gratitude to it.'

'And pray, Sir,' cries Mrs. Ellison, 'what can be your objection to your lady's going to a place, which I will venture to say is as reputable as any about town, and which is frequented by the best company?'

'Pardon me, good Mrs. Ellison,' said Booth. 'As my wife is so good to acquiesce without knowing my reasons, I am not, I think, obliged to assign them to any other person.'

'Well,' cries Mrs. Ellison; 'if I had been told this, I would not have believed it. What! refuse your lady an innocent diversion? and that too, when you have not the pretence to say it would cost you a farthing!'

'Why will you say any more on this subject, dear Madam?' cries Amelia. 'All diversions are to me matters of such indifference, that the bare inclinations of any one for whom I have the least value, would at all times turn the balance of mine. I am sure, then, after what Mr. Booth hath said—'

'My dear,' cries he, taking her up hastily, 'I sincerely ask your pardon; I spoke inadvertently, and in a passion;

'I never once thought of controuling you, nor ever would. Nay, I said in the same breath, you would not go; and, upon my honour, I meant nothing more.'

'My dear,' said she, 'you have no need of making any apology. I am not in the least offended; and am convinced you will never deny me what I shall desire.'

'Try him, try him, Madam,' cries Mrs. Ellison; 'I will be judged by all the women in town, if it is possible for a wife to ask her husband any thing more reasonable. You cannot conceive what a sweet, charming, elegant, delicious place it is! Paradise itself can hardly be equal to it.'

'I beg you will excuse me, Madam,' said Amelia; 'nay, I intreat you will ask me no more; for be assured I must and will refuse. Do let me desire you to give the ticket to poor Mrs. Bennet. I believe it would greatly oblige her.'

'Pardon me, Madam,' said Mrs. Ellison. 'If you will not accept of it, I am not so distressed for want of company as to go to such a publick place with all sorts of people, neither. I am always very glad to see Mrs. Bennet at my own house, because I look upon her as a very good sort of woman; but I don't chuse to be seen with such people in publick places.'

Amelia expressed some little indignation at this last speech, which she declared to be entirely beyond her comprehension; and soon afterwards Mrs. Ellison, finding all her efforts to prevail on Amelia were ineffectual, took her leave, giving Mr. Booth two or three sarcastical words, and a much more sarcastical look, at her departure.

CHAP. VI.

A SCENE, IN WHICH SOME LADIES WILL POSSIBLY THINK AMELIA'S CONDUCT EXCEPTIONABLE.

BOOOTH and his wife being left alone, a solemn silence prevailed during a few minutes. At last Amelia, who though a good was yet a human creature, said to her husband, 'Pray, my dear, do inform me what

could put you into so great a passion when Mrs. Ellison first offered me the tickets for this masquerade?

'I had rather you would not ask me,' said Booth, 'You have obliged me greatly in your ready acquiescence with my desire, and you will add greatly to the obligation by not enquiring the reason of it. This you may depend upon, Amelia, that your good and happiness are the great objects of all my wishes, and the end I propose in all my actions. This view alone could tempt me to refuse you any thing, or to conceal any thing from you.'

'I will appeal to yourself,' answered she, 'whether this be not using me too much like a child; and whether I can possibly help being a little offended at it.'

'Not in the least,' replied he. 'I use you only with the tenderness of a friend. I would only endeavour to conceal that from you, which I think would give you uneasiness if you knew. These are called the pious frauds of friendship.'

'I detest all fraud,' says she; 'and pious is too good an epithet to be joined to so odious a word. You have often, you know, tried these frauds with no better effect than to tease and torment me. You cannot imagine, my dear, but that I must have a violent desire to know the reason of words which, I own, I never expected to have heard: and the more you have shewn a reluctance to tell me, the more eagerly I have longed to know. Nor can this be called a vain curiosity, since I seem so much interested in this affair. If, after all this, you still insist on keeping the secret, I will convince you I am not ignorant of the duty of a wife, by my obedience; but I cannot help telling you at the same time, you will make me one of the most miserable of women.'

'That is,' cries he, 'in other words, my dear Emily, to say, I will be contented without the secret, but I am resolved to know it nevertheless.'

'Nay, if you say so,' cries she, 'I am convinced you will tell me. Positively, dear Billy, I must and will know.'

'Why then, positively,' says Booth, 'I will tell you; and I think I shall

then shew you, that however well you may know the duty of a wife, I am not always able to behave like a husband. In a word, then, my dear, the secret is no more than this: I am unwilling you should receive any more presents from my lord.'

'Mercy upon me!' cries she, with all the marks of astonishment; 'what! a masquerade ticket!'

'Yes, my dear,' cries he; 'that is perhaps the very worst and most dangerous of all. Few men make presents of those tickets to ladies, without intending to meet them at the place. And what do we know of your companion? To be sincere with you, I have not liked her behaviour for some time. What might be the consequence of going with such a woman to such a place, to meet such a person, I tremble to think! And now, my dear, I have told you my reason of refusing her offer with some little vehemence; and, I think, I need explain myself no farther.'

'You need not indeed, Sir,' answered she. 'Good Heavens! did I ever expect to hear this! I can appeal to yourself, Mr. Booth, if I have ever done any thing to deserve such a suspicion. If ever any action of mine, nay, if ever any thought had stained the innocence of my soul, I could be contented!'

'How cruelly do you mistake me!' said Booth; 'what suspicion have I ever shewn?'

'Can you ask it,' answered she, 'after what you have just now declared?'

'If I have declared any suspicion of you,' replied he, 'or if I ever entertained a thought leading that way, may the worst of evils that ever afflicted human nature attend me! I know the pure innocence of that tender bosom; I do know it, my lovely angel, and adore it. The snares which might be laid for that innocence, were alone the cause of my apprehension. I feared what a wicked and voluptuous man, resolved to sacrifice every thing to the gratification of a sensual appetite with the most delicious repast, might attempt. If ever I injured the unspotted whiteness of thy virtue in my imagination, may hell—'

'Do not terrify me,' cries she, interrupting

interrupting him, 'with such imprecations. O Mr. Booth, Mr. Booth! you must well know that a woman's virtue is always her sufficient guard. No husband, without suspecting that, can suspect any danger from those snares you mention. And why, if you are liable to take such things into your head, may not your suspicions fall on me, as well as on any other? for sure nothing was ever more unjust, I will not say ungrateful, than the suspicions which you have bestowed on his lordship. I do solemnly declare, in all the times I have seen the poor man, he hath never once offered the least forwardness. His behaviour hath been polite, indeed, but rather remarkably distant than otherwise: particularly when we played at cards together, I don't remember he spoke ten words to me all the evening; and when I was at his house, though he shewed the greatest fondness imaginable to the children, he took so little notice of me, that a vain woman would have been very little pleased with him; and if he gave them many presents, he never offered me one. The first, indeed, which he ever offered me, was that which you in that kind manner forced me to refuse.'

'All this may be only the effect of art,' said Booth. 'I am convinced he doth, nay, I am convinced he must like you; and my good friend James, who perfectly well knows the world, told me that his lordship's character was that of the most profuse in his pleasures with women; nay, what said Mrs. James this very evening? "His lordship is extremely generous—where he likes!"'

'I shall never forget the sneer with which he spoke those last words.'

'I am convinced they injure him,' cries Amelia. 'As for Mrs. James, she was always given to be censorious; I remarked it in her long ago as her greatest fault; and as for the colonel, I believe he may find faults enough of this kind in his own bosom, without searching after them among his neighbours. I am sure he hath the most impudent look of all the men I know; and I solemnly declare, the very last time he was here, he put me out of countenance more than once.'

'Colonel James,' answered Booth, 'may have his faults very probably. I do not look upon him as a saint, nor do I believe he desires I should; but what interest could he have in abusing this lord's character to me? Or why should I question his truth, when he assured me that my lord had never done an act of beneficence in his life, but for the sake of some woman whom he lusted after?'

'Then I myself can confute him,' replied Amelia: 'for besides his services to you, which, for the future, I shall wish to forget, and his kindness to my little babes, how inconsistent is the character which James gives of him, with his lordship's behaviour to his own nephew and niece, whose extreme fondness of their uncle sufficiently proclaims his goodness to them! I need not mention all that I have heard from Mrs. Ellison, every word of which I believe; for I have great reason to think, notwithstanding some little levity, which, to give her her due, she fees and condemns in herself, she is a very good sort of woman.'

'Well, my dear,' cries Booth, 'I may have been deceived, and I heartily hope I am so; but in cases of this nature, it is always good to be on the surest side: for, as Congreve says,

'The wife too jealous are; fools too secure.'

Here Amelia burst into tears; upon which Booth immediately caught her in his arms, and endeavoured to comfort her. Passion, however, for a while obstructed her speech, and at last she cried, 'O Mr. Booth! can I bear to hear the word "jealousy" from your mouth!'

'Why, my love,' said Booth, 'will you so fatally misunderstand my meaning? How often shall I protest, that it is not of you, but of him that I was jealous. If you could look into my breast, and there read all the most secret thoughts of my heart, you would not see one faint idea to your dishonour.'

'I don't misunderstand you, my dear,' said she, 'so much as I am afraid you misunderstand yourself. What is it you fear? You mention not force, but snares. Is not this to confess, at least, that you have some doubt

'doubt of my understanding? Do you then really imagine me so weak as to be cheated of my virtue? Am I to be deceived into an affection for a man before I perceive the least inward hint of my danger? No, Mr. Booth; believe me, a woman must be a fool indeed, who can have in earnest such an excuse for her actions. I have not, I think, any very high opinion of my judgment; but so far I shall rely upon it, that no man breathing could have any such designs as you have apprehended, without my immediately seeing them; and how I should then act, I hope my whole conduct to you hath sufficiently declared.'

'Well, my dear,' cries Booth, 'I beg you will mention it no more: if possible, forget it. I hope, nay, I believe, I have been in the wrong; pray, forgive me.'

'I will, I do forgive you, my dear,' said she, 'if forgiveness be a proper word for one whom you have rather made miserable than angry; but let me entreat you to banish for ever all such suspicions from your mind. I hope Mrs. Ellifson hath not discovered the real cause of your passion; but, poor woman! if she had, I am convinced it would go no farther. Oh, Heavens! I would not for the world it should reach his lordship's ears. You would lose the best friend that ever man had. Nay, I would not for his own sake, poor man! for I really believe it would affect him greatly; and I must, I cannot help having an esteem for so much goodness—an esteem which, by this dear hand,' said she, taking Booth's hand and kissing it, 'no man alive shall ever obtain by making love to me.'

Booth caught her in his arms, and tenderly embraced her; after which the reconciliation soon became compleat; and Booth in the contemplation of his happiness entirely buried all his jealous thoughts.

CHAP. VII.

A CHAPTER IN WHICH THERE IS MUCH LEARNING.

THE next morning, whilst Booth was gone to take his morning-walk, Amelia went down into Mrs.

Ellifson's apartment, where though she was received with great civility, yet she found that lady was not at all pleased with Mr. Booth; and by some hints which dropt from her in conversation, Amelia very greatly apprehended that Mrs. Ellifson had too much suspicion of her husband's real uneasiness; for that lady declared very openly, she could not help perceiving what sort of man Mr. Booth was: 'And though I have the greatest regard for you, Madam, in the world,' said she, 'yet I think myself in honour obliged not to impose on his lordship; who, I know very well, hath conceived his greatest liking to the captain, on my telling him that he was the best husband in the world.'

Amelia's fears gave her much disturbance, and when her husband returned, she acquainted him with them; upon which occasion, as it was natural, she resumed a little the topick of their former discourse; nor could she help casting, though in very gentle terms, some slight blame on Booth, for having entertained a suspicion, which, she said, might in its consequence very possibly prove their ruin, and occasion the loss of his lordship's friendship.

Booth became highly affected with what his wife said; and the more, as he had just received a note from Colonel James, informing him that the colonel had heard of a vacant company in the regiment which Booth had mentioned to him, and that he had been with his lordship about it, who had promised to use his utmost interest to obtain him the command.

The poor man now expressed the utmost concern for his yesterday's behaviour; said, he believed the devil had taken possession of him; and concluded with crying out, 'Sure I was born, my dearest creature, to be your torment.'

Amelia no sooner saw her husband's distress, than she instantly forbore whatever might seem likely to aggravate it, and applied herself, with all her power, to comfort him. 'If you will give me leave to offer my advice, my dearest soul,' said she, 'I think all might yet be remedied. I think you know me too well, to suspect that the desire of diversion should induce me to mention what I am now going to propose. And in that confidence, I will ask you to let me accept my lord's

and

and Mrs. Ellison's offer, and go to the masquerade. No matter how little while I stay there: if you desire it, I will not be an hour from you. I can make an hundred excuses to come home, or tell a real truth, and say I am tired with the place. The bare going will cure every thing.

Amelia had no sooner done speaking, than Booth immediately approved her advice, and readily gave his consent. He could not, however, help saying, that the shorter her stay was there, the more agreeable it would be to him: 'For you know, my dear,' said he, 'I would never willingly be a moment out of your sight.'

In the afternoon Amelia sent to invite Mrs. Ellison to a dish of tea, and Booth undertook to laugh off all that had passed yesterday; in which attempt, the abundant good-humour of that lady gave him great hopes of success.

Mrs. Bennet came that afternoon to make a visit, and was almost an hour with Booth and Amelia, before the entry of Mrs. Ellison.

Mr. Booth had hitherto rather disliked this young lady, and had wondered at the pleasure which Amelia declared she took in her company. This afternoon, however, he changed his opinion, and liked her almost as much as his wife had done. She did, indeed, behave at this time with more than ordinary gaiety; and good-humour gave a glow to her countenance that set off her features, which were very pretty, to the best advantage, and lessened the deadness that had usually appeared in her complexion.

But if Booth was now pleased with Mrs. Bennet, Amelia was still more pleased with her than ever; for when their discourse turned on love, Amelia discovered that her new friend had all the same sentiments on that subject with herself. In the course of their conversation, Booth gave Mrs. Bennet a hint of wishing her a good husband; upon which, both the ladies declaimed against second marriages with equal vehemence.

Upon this occasion, Booth and his wife discovered a talent in their visitant, to which they had been before entirely strangers, and for which they both greatly admired her; and this was, that the lady was a good scholar, in which indeed she had the advantage of poor Amelia, whose reading was confined

to English plays and poetry; besides which, I think, she had conversed only with the divinity of the great and learned Dr. Barrow, and with the histories of the excellent Bishop Burnet.

Amelia delivered herself on the subject of second marriages with much eloquence and great good sense; but when Mrs. Bennet came to give her opinion, she spoke in the following manner: 'I shall not enter into the question concerning the legality of bigamy. Our laws certainly allow it, and so, I think, doth our religion. We are now debating only on the decency of it; and in this light, I own myself as strenuous an advocate against it, as any Roman matron would have been in those ages of the commonwealth, when it was held to be infamous. For my own part, how great a paradox soever my opinion may seem, I solemnly declare, I see but little difference between having two husbands at one time, and at several times; and of this I am very confident, that the same degree of love for a first husband, which preserves a woman in the one case, will preserve her in the other. There is one argument which I scarce know how to deliver before you, Sir; but—if a woman hath lived with her first husband without having children, I think it unpardonable in her to carry barrenness into a second family. On the contrary, if she hath children by her first husband, to give them a second father is still more unpardonable.'

'But suppose, Madam,' cries Booth, interrupting her, with a smile, 'she should have had children by her first husband, and have lost them?'

'That is a case,' answered she, with a sigh, 'which I did not desire to think of; and I must own it the most favourable light in which a second marriage can be seen. But the Scriptures, as Petrarch observes, rather suffer them than commend them; and St. Jerome speaks against them with the utmost bitterness.'—'I remember,' cries Booth, (who was willing either to shew his learning, or to draw out the lady's) 'a very wise law of Charondas, the famous law-giver of Thurium, by which men who married a second time were removed from all publick counsels; for it was scarce reasonable

* reasonable to suppose, that he who
 * was so great a fool in his own fami-
 * ly, should be wise in publick affairs.
 * And though second marriages were
 * permitted among the Romans, yet
 * they were at the same time discour-
 * aged; and those Roman widows
 * who refused them, were held in high
 * esteem, and honoured with what Va-
 * lerius Maximus calls the Corona Pu-
 * dicitæ. In the noble family of Ca-
 * milli, there was not, in many ages;
 * a single instance of this, which Mar-
 * tial calls adultery:

Quæ toties nubit, non nubit; adultera lege est.

* True, Sir, says Mrs. Bennet;
 * and Virgil calls this a violation of
 * chastity, and makes Dido speak of it
 * with the utmost detestation:

*Sed mihi vel Tellus optem prius ima debiscat;
 * Vel Pater Omnipotens adigat me fulmine ad*

*umbras,
 * Pallentes umbras Erebi, noctemque profun-*

*dam,
 * Ante, pudor, quam te violo, aut tua jura*

*resolvam!
 * Ille meos, primum qui me sibi junxit, amores,
 * Ille habeat semper secum, servetque se-*

She repeated these lines with so strong
 an emphasis, that she almost frightened
 Amelia out of her wits, and not a lit-
 tle staggered Booth, who was himself
 no contemptible scholar. He expressed
 great admiration of the lady's learning;
 upon which she said, it was all the for-
 tune given her by her father, and all
 the dower left her by her husband:
 'And sometimes,' said she, 'I am in-
 clined to think I enjoy more pleasure
 from it, than if they had bestowed on
 me what the world would in general
 call more valuable.' She then took
 occasion, from the surprize which Booth
 had affected to conceive at her repeat-
 ing Latin with so good a grace, to com-
 ment on that great absurdity (for so she
 termed it) of excluding women from
 learning; for which they were equally
 qualified with the men, and in which
 so many had made so notable a profici-
 ency: for a proof of which she mention-
 ed Madam Dacier, and many others.

Though both Booth and Amelia out-
 wardly concurred with her sentiments,
 it may be a question whether they did
 not assent rather out of complaisance,
 than from their real judgment.

C H A P. VIII.

CONTAINING SOME UNACCOUNT-
 ABLE BEHAVIOUR IN MRS. EL-
 LISON.

MRS. Ellison made her entrance
 at the end of the preceding dis-
 course. At her first appearance she put
 on an unusual degree of formality and
 reserve; but when Amelia had ac-
 quainted her that she designed to ac-
 cept the favour intended her, she soon
 began to alter the gravity of her muscles,
 and presently fell in with that ridicule
 which Booth thought proper to throw
 on his yesterday's behaviour.

The conversation now became very
 lively and pleasant; in which Booth
 having mentioned the discourse that
 passed in the last chapter, and having
 greatly complimented Mrs. Bennet's
 speech on that occasion, Mrs. Ellison,
 who was as strenuous an advocate on
 the other side, began to rally that lady
 extremely, declaring it was a certain
 sign she intended to marry again soon.
 'Married ladies,' cries she, 'I believe,
 sometimes think themselves in earnest
 in such declarations, though they are
 oftener, perhaps, meant as compli-
 ments to their husbands; but when
 widows exclaim loudly against se-
 cond marriages, I would always lay
 a wager, that the man, if not the
 wedding-day, is absolutely fixed on.'

Mrs. Bennet made very little answer
 to this sarcasm. Indeed, she had scarce
 opened her lips from the time of Mrs.
 Ellison's coming into the room, and
 had grown particularly grave at the
 mention of the masquerade. Amelia
 imputed this to her being left out of
 the party, a matter which is often no
 small mortification to human pride;
 and, in a whisper, asked Mrs. Ellison if
 she could not procure a third ticket;
 to which she received an absolute ne-
 gative.

During the whole time of Mrs. Ben-
 net's stay, which was above an hour
 afterwards, she remained perfectly si-
 lent, and looked extremely melancholy.
 This made Amelia very uneasy, as she
 concluded she had guessed the cause of
 her vexation; in which opinion she was
 the more confirmed, from certain looks
 of no very pleasant kind which Mrs.
 Bennet now and then cast on Mrs. Elli-
 son,

son, and the more than ordinary concern that appeared in the former lady's countenance, whenever the masquerade was mentioned, and which unfortunately was the principal topic of their discourse; for Mrs. Ellison gave a very elaborate description of the extreme beauty of the place, and elegance of the diversion.

When Mrs. Bennet was departed, Amelia could not help again soliciting Mrs. Ellison for another ticket, declaring she was certain Mrs. Bennet had a great inclination to go with them; but Mrs. Ellison again excused herself from asking it of his lordship. 'Besides, Madam,' says she, 'if I would go thither with Mrs. Bennet, which, I own to you, I don't chuse, as she is a person whom nobody knows, I very much doubt whether she herself would like it; for she is a woman of a very unaccountable turn. All her delight lies in books; and as for public diversions, I have often heard her declare her abhorrence of them.'

'What then,' said Amelia, 'could occasion all that gravity, from the moment the masquerade was mentioned?'

'As to that,' answered the other, 'there is no guessing. You have seen her altogether as grave before now. She hath had these fits of gravity at times ever since the death of her husband.'

'Poor creature!' cries Amelia; 'I heartily pity her; for she must certainly suffer a great deal on these occasions. I declare I have taken a strange fancy to her.'

'Perhaps you would not like her so well, if you knew her thoroughly,' answered Mrs. Ellison. 'She is, upon the whole, but of a whimsical temper; and, if you will take my opinion, you should not cultivate too much intimacy with her. I know you will never mention what I say; but she is like some pictures, which please best at a distance.'

Amelia did not seem to agree with these sentiments, and she greatly importuned Mrs. Ellison to be more explicit, but to no purpose: she continued to give only dark hints to Mrs. Bennet's disadvantage; and if ever she let drop something a little too harsh, she failed not immediately to contradict herself, by throwing some gentle com-

mendations into the other scale; so that her conduct appeared utterly unaccountable to Amelia; and, upon the whole, she knew not whether to conclude Mrs. Ellison to be a friend or enemy to Mrs. Bennet.

During this latter conversation, Booth was not in the room: for he had been summoned down stairs by the serjeant, who came to him with news from Murphy, whom he had met that evening, and who assured the serjeant, that if he was desirous of recovering the debt which he had before pretended to have on Booth, he might shortly have an opportunity; for that there was to be a very strong petition to the board the next time they sat. Murphy said farther, that he need not fear having his money; for that to his certain knowledge the captain had several things of great value, and even his children had gold watches.

This greatly alarmed Booth; and still more, when the serjeant reported to him from Murphy, that all these things had been seen in his possession within a day last past. He now plainly perceived as he thought, that Murphy himself, or one of his emissaries, had been the supposed madman; and he now very well accounted to himself, in his own mind, for all that had happened; conceiving that the design was to examine into the state of his effects, and to try whether it was worth his creditors while to plunder him by law.

At his return to his apartment, he communicated what he had heard to Amelia and Mrs. Ellison, not disguising his apprehensions of the enemy's intentions; but Mrs. Ellison endeavoured to laugh him out of his fears, calling him faint-hearted, and assuring him he might depend on her lawyer. 'Till you hear from him,' said she, 'you may rest entirely contented; for take my word for it, no danger can happen to you, of which you will not be timely apprized by him: and as for the fellow that had the impudence to come into your room, if he was sent on such an errand as you mention, I heartily wish I had been at home; I would have secured him safe with a constable, and have carried him directly before Justice Thrasher. I know the justice is an enemy to bailiffs, on his own account.'

This heartening speech a little roused

the courage of Booth, and somewhat comforted Amelia; though the spirits of both had been too much hurried, to suffer them either to give or receive much entertainment that evening; which Mrs. Ellison perceiving, soon took her leave, and left this unhappy couple to seek relief from sleep, that powerful friend to the distressed; though, like other powerful friends, he is not always ready to give his assistance to those who want it most.

CHAP. IX.

CONTAINING A VERY STRANGE INCIDENT.

WHEN the husband and wife were alone, they again talked over the news which the serjeant had brought; on which occasion, Amelia did all she could to conceal her own fears, and to quiet those of her husband. At last she turned the conversation to another subject, and poor Mrs. Bennet was brought on the carpet. 'I should be sorry,' cries Amelia, 'to find I had conceived an affection for a bad woman; and yet I begin to fear Mrs. Ellison knows something of her more than she cares to discover; why else should she be unwilling to be seen with her in public? Besides, I have observed that Mrs. Ellison hath been always backward to introduce her to me, nor would ever bring her to my apartment, though I have often desired her. Nay, she hath given me frequent hints not to cultivate the acquaintance. What do you think, my dear? I should be very sorry to contract an intimacy with a wicked person.'

'Nay, my dear,' cries Booth; 'I know no more of her, nor indeed hardly so much as yourself. But this I think, that if Mrs. Ellison knows any reason why she should not have introduced Mrs. Bennet into your company, she was very much in the wrong in introducing her into it.'

In discourses of this kind they passed the remainder of the evening. In the morning Booth rose early, and going down stairs received from little Betty a

sealed note, which contained the following words:

'Beware, beware, beware!
'For I apprehend a dreadful snare
'Is laid for virtuous innocence,
'Under a friend's false pretence.'

Booth immediately enquired of the girl who brought this note, and was told it came by a chairman, who, having delivered it, departed without saying a word.

He was extremely staggered at what he read, and presently referred the advice to the same affair on which he had received those hints from Atkinson the preceding evening; but when he came to consider the words more maturely, he could not so well reconcile the two last lines of this poetical epistle, if it may be so called, with any danger which the law gave him reason to apprehend. Mr. Murphy and his gang could not be well said to attack his innocence or virtue; nor did they attack him under any colour or pretence of friendship.

After much deliberation on this matter, a very strange suspicion came into his head, and this was that he was betrayed by Mrs. Ellison. He had for some time conceived no very high opinion of that good gentlewoman, and he now began to suspect that she was bribed to betray him. By this means, he thought he could best account for the strange appearance of the supposed madman: and when this concert once had birth in his mind, several circumstances nourished and improved it. Among these, were her jocular behaviour and raillery on that occasion, and her attempt to ridicule his fears from the message which the serjeant had brought him.

This suspicion was indeed preposterous, and not at all warranted by, or even consistent with, the character and whole behaviour of Mrs. Ellison; but it was the only one which at that time suggested itself to his mind, and however blamable it might be, it was certainly not unnatural in him to entertain it: for so great a torment is anxiety to the human mind, that we always endeavour to relieve ourselves from it by guesses, however doubtful or uncertain; on all which occasions,

dislike

dislike and hatred are the surest guides to lead our suspicion to its object.

When Amelia rose to breakfast, Booth produced the note which he had received, saying, 'My dear, you have so often blamed me for keeping secrets from you, and I have so often, indeed, endeavoured to conceal secrets of this kind from you with such ill success, that I think I shall never more attempt it.' Amelia read the letter hastily, and seemed not a little discomposed; then turning to Booth with a very disconsolate countenance, she said, 'Sure Fortune takes a delight in terrifying us! What can be the meaning of this?' Then fixing her eyes attentively on the paper, she perused it for some time, till Booth cried, 'How is it possible, my Emily, you can read such stuff patiently? The verses are certainly as bad as ever were written.'—'I was trying, my dear,' answered she, 'to recollect the hand; for I will take my oath I have seen it before, and that very lately;' and suddenly she cried out with great emotion, 'I remember it perfectly now: it is Mrs. Bennet's hand. Mrs. Ellison shewed me a letter from her but a day or two ago. It is a very remarkable hand, and I am positive it is her's.'

'If it be her's,' cries Booth, 'what can she possibly mean by the latter part of her caution? Sure Mrs. Ellison hath no intention to betray us!'

'I know not what she means,' answered Amelia; 'but I am resolved to know immediately, for I am certain of the hand. By the greatest luck in the world, she told me yesterday where her lodgings were, when she pressed me exceedingly to come and see her. She lives but a very few doors from us, and I will go to her this moment.'

Booth made not the least objection to his wife's design. His curiosity was indeed as great as her's; and so was his impatience to satisfy it, though he mentioned not this impatience to Amelia; and perhaps it had been well for him if he had.

Amelia, therefore, presently equipped herself in her walking-dress, and leaving her children to the care of her husband, made all possible haste to Mrs. Bennet's lodgings.

Amelia waited near five minutes at Mrs. Bennet's door before any one came to open it; at length a maid-servant appeared, who being asked if Mrs. Bennet was at home, answered with some confusion in her countenance, that she did not know: 'But, Madam,' says she, 'if you will send up your name, I will go and see.' Amelia then told her name; and the wench, after staying a considerable time, returned and acquainted her that Mrs. Bennet was at home. She was then ushered into a parlour, and told that the lady would wait on her presently.

In this parlour Amelia cooled her heels, as the phrase is, near a quarter of an hour. She seemed indeed at this time in the miserable situation of one of those poor wretches who make their morning visits to the great to solicit favours, or perhaps to solicit the payment of a debt; for both are alike treated as beggars, and the latter sometimes considered as the more troublesome beggars of the two.

During her stay here, Amelia observed the house to be in great confusion; a great bustle was heard above stairs, and the maid ran up and down several times in a great hurry.

At length Mrs. Bennet herself came in. She was greatly disordered in her looks, and had, as the women call it, huddled on her cloaths in much haste; for in truth she was in bed when Amelia first came. Of this fact she informed her, as the only apology she could make for having caused her to wait so long for her company.

Amelia very readily accepted her apology, but asked her with a smile, if these early hours were usual with her. Mrs. Bennet turned as red as scarlet at the question, and answered, 'No indeed, dear Madam; I am, for the most part, a very early riser; but I happened accidentally to sit up very late last night. I am sure, I had little expectation of your intending such a favour this morning.'

Amelia, looking very steadfastly at her, said, 'Is it possible, Madam, you should think such a note as this would raise no curiosity in me?' She then gave her the note, asking her if she did not know the hand.

Mrs. Bennet appeared in the utmost surprize and confusion at this instant. Indeed, if Amelia had conceived but

the slightest suspicion before, the behaviour of the lady would have been a sufficient confirmation to her of the truth. She waited not, therefore, for an answer; which, indeed, the other seemed in no haste to give, but conjured her in the most earnest manner to explain to her the meaning of so extraordinary an act of friendship: 'For so,' said she, 'I esteem it; being convinced you must have sufficient reason for the warning you have given me.'

Mrs. Bennet, after some hesitation, answered, 'I need not, I believe, tell you how much I am surprized at what you have shewn me; and the chief reason of my surprize is, how you came to discover my hand. Sure, Madam, you have not shewn it to Mrs. Ellifson?'

Amelia declared she had not, but desired she would question her no farther. 'What signifies how I discovered it, since your hand it certainly is!'

'I own it is,' cries Mrs. Bennet, recovering her spirits; 'and since you have not shewn it to that woman, I am satisfied. I begin to guess now whence you might have your information: but no matter; I wish I had never done any thing of which I ought to be more ashamed. No one can, I think, justly accuse me of a crime on that account; and I thank Heaven, my shame will never be directed by the false opinion of the world. Perhaps it was wrong to shew my letter; but when I consider all circumstances, I can forgive it.'

'Since you have guessed the truth,' said Amelia, 'I am not obliged to deny it. She, indeed, shewed me your letter; but I am sure you have not the least reason to be ashamed of it. On the contrary, your behaviour on so melancholy an occasion was highly praise-worthy; and your bearing up

under such afflictions, as the loss of a husband in so dreadful a situation was truly great and heroic.'

'So Mrs. Ellifson, then, hath shewn you my letter?' cries Mrs. Bennet, eagerly.

'Why, did not you guess it yourself?' answered Amelia; 'otherwise I am sure I have betrayed my honour in mentioning it. I hope you have not drawn me inadvertently into any breach of my promise. Did you not assert, and that with an absolute certainty, that you knew she had shewn me your letter, and that you was not angry with her for so doing?'

'I am so confused,' replied Mrs. Bennet, 'that I scarce know what I say: yes, yes; I remember I did say so. I wish I had no greater reason to be angry with her than that.'

'For Heaven's sake,' cries Amelia, 'do not delay my request any longer. What you say now greatly increases my curiosity; and my mind will be on the rack till you discover your whole meaning: for I am more and more convinced, that something of the utmost importance was the purport of your message.'

'Of the utmost importance, indeed,' cries Mrs. Bennet; 'at least you will own my apprehensions were sufficiently well founded. O gracious Heaven, how happy shall I think myself, if I should have proved your preservation! I will, indeed, explain my meaning; but in order to disclose all my fears in their just colours, I must unfold my whole history to you. Can you have patience, Madam, to listen to the story of the most unfortunate of women?'

Amelia assured her of the highest attention; and Mrs. Bennet soon after began to relate what is written in the seventh book of this history.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.